

PART I

The future of the Muslim Brotherhood

By Vivian Salama
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The Daily Star Egypt talks to the youngest members of Egypt's largest, but banned, party about politics, religion, and life in general in a two part series.

CAIRO: They are feared and outlawed as much as they are supported and renowned worldwide. The Muslim Brotherhood (*El-Ikhwan El-Muslimeen*), perhaps the most misunderstood political movement in existence, arguably has the greatest number of supporters in Egypt, and possibly, across the Arab world. With a presence in 70 countries, a target audience of the fastest growing religion in the world—some 1.2 billion Muslims worldwide—and dozens of Islamic organizations spawned by it, its influence is far beyond the reaches of Egypt's government.

Yet for decades, they have had attached to their name the leprous image of political bad boys, their candidates for office banned from the election ballot should they reveal their party's name.

In this era of political transition, as weathered generals sit in their offices and engage solely in a war of words, their soldiers—youth, passionate, in some cases, naïve—head to the frontlines day in and day out defending their cause. Perhaps they are the most accurate depiction of the party and their views—honest, refreshing, and unacquainted with the politics behind the politics. This week, four young men and two young women of the Muslim Brotherhood came together for a discussion held exclusively with *The Daily Star Egypt*, to talk politics, religion and life in general. While certain topics riled them up more than others, they look to communicate the message that they are just average young adults who hold politics and religion close to their hearts.

Most surprisingly, as strong-minded as each is about their political views, of the six, two of them have not told their parents they are linked to the Muslim Brotherhood, a third says his parents do not know to what degree he is involved. The reason across the board is fear. Those whose parents are not aware of their involvement say they hide it simply because they don't want their parents to worry.

"They would not refuse it, but I do not like to make them worried," admits Lubna Mohamed, 20, a political science major at Cairo University. "Generally, here in Egypt, even if you're a communist, the idea of getting involved in politics, holding a political stand on

anything is not easy, it comes with consequences."

"The idea is that maybe the father and mother will support the movement with their heart, but they don't want their son or daughter to be involved," explains Osama Ghobish, 21, who studies electrical engineering at Cairo University. "My parents know I am in the Muslim Brotherhood, but I'm not sure they realize how much I am with them."

Even those who have told their parents say it is a tough thing for any parent to accept. As opposition movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Kefaya grow more outspoken by the day, equally the government's grip tightens in the face of growing resistance. In recent months, sweeping arrests of members of the Muslim Brotherhood have shaken the group out of a period of surveillance and reflection, into active duty, only this time, with a slightly different edge. Under the leadership of Supreme Guide Mahdi Akef, today's Muslim Brotherhood appears gentler, more peaceful and places greater emphasis on their political platform, not a religious agenda. Akef has even instructed his members not to raise the Qur'an at protests for it overshadows the Brotherhood's true message—political reform.

Just this week, Akef released a statement confirming that the Muslim Brotherhood would not endorse President Hosni Mubarak in his bid for re-election during Egypt's first ever multi-candidate campaign. It comes as no surprise. However as candidates such as El-Ghad party leader Ayman Nour seek support from the Brotherhood, the outlawed group is refusing them one by one.

The fact remains, Egypt's largest party will not participate in this historic election, but just as significantly, they have chosen not to boycott the ballot as many opposition groups have. While members of the Muslim Brotherhood are permitted to run as independents, no independents are among the ten candidates approved by the Electoral Commission as they could not secure the backing of 250 elected officials, since parliament is dominated by Mubarak's National Democratic Party (NDP).

"Within the 10 candidates, it's not even a question of whether there are two or three better than Mubarak. No one is good," insists Ibrahim El-Houdaiby, 22, a senior at the American University in Cairo (AUC) studying political science. "I don't care about the person, I care about his program. If we see that a candidate's program was a good, strong program, of course we would support him."

"If you look at the people we



have here in the country, ask yourself, can any of them be president? It's difficult," says Asmaa Gamal, 20, studying commerce at Cairo University. "Even the publicity that's written in the newspapers about the candidates, they are showing all of these strange personalities running for president."

"How can you expect change when the people must walk down your path, must enter your door in order to reach the other side?" questions Lubna, the others nod in agreement. "The other point we want to communicate is that it is not whether or not someone from the Muslim Brotherhood is elected, but that it is a natural process, that it is coming from the people and the candidate is someone that the people want," adds Mahmoud Moustafa, 19, a commerce student at Cairo University. "However, I believe that these elections are just a big show and that's it."

While Egypt has remained moderately liberal when compared to countries in the Gulf, the Muslim Brotherhood continues to push for a Sharia-based government, where Islam and politics work hand in hand. The country has, under the rule of the NDP, managed to cling to secularism, as citizens adopt a more conservative outer image. The young people of the Muslim Brotherhood say the idea of secular and non-secular is an unnatural concept conjured up by the West.

"The idea of non-secularism originally is comes from the West," says Lubna. "The idea of Islam, as a non-secular government, it doesn't mean that a sheikh is running the



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government. It simply means that we follow the rules of Sharia. There is no discrimination."

"We don't say that if the Brotherhood holds the government that they are going to enforce the ideologies of Islam in the country," explains Ahmed Ibrahim, 24, a medical student at Cairo University. "We would try to enforce what is naturally considered right and wrong. The ideas of [Islam] would be there, but it does not have anything to do with having a non-secular government."

"The people think that we will drastically change things and have a religious authority running the country and that we will change things to a way we see fit," adds Mahmoud. "It will stay as it is, a secular country, which

under the constitution would be supported by Islam. Nothing new would come out of it."

The Brotherhood's leader, Mahdi Akef himself, told *The Daily Star Egypt* last June that there is no perfect government in the world—citing polar examples such as the United States and Iran as both missing the point to true, honest democratic governance. "The government that works right must respect the people's opinion," explained Akef. "There is no government that respects the people's opinions."

The young people of the Muslim Brotherhood agree. When asked to define democracy, most of them initially responded, with a chuckle, "Not Egypt!" "Democracy is the ideas of the people," responds Asmaa.

"The people choose, they decide. They govern themselves."

"Democracy is the opinion of the majority," adds Ibrahim. "We don't look at the government for the first steps. The government is the result of a strong civil society."

"Democracy is the opposite of what we are in now, that's for starters," says Ahmed, sparking giggles from the group. "It is an idea of free expression. It would give people the opportunity to express his or her own point of view, and the situation should be the opinion of the majority and that a person can make himself heard."

The series continues in tomorrow's edition, as they discuss Jihad, terrorism, Islamic conservatism.

NDP discusses campaign progress

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The NDP today is...the implications of the presidential elections on the parliamentary elections - what kind of positive and negative implications the presidential election will have on the parliamentary elections" says Mohieldin. "The program of the president, as it is outlined, in political reforms, social reforms, the economic components, requires enormous political support and many of these changes requires the support of the parliament in terms of the logistical changes."

There remains some discrepancy in the logistics of judicial review. Kamal says the number of polling stations will be 9,737, all of which will have judicial supervision on Election Day. However, members of the Judges' Club, which has threatened not to supervise the elections should their demands for independence not be met, say the number of judges available in the country are not nearly enough to satisfy this demand at polling stations.

Judiciary sources say there are no more than 8,000 working judges in Egypt today. While Kamal promises for 100

percent judicial supervision, he adds that judicial review is not limited to judges alone, but to higher members of the judicial branch, including prosecutors and members of judicial associations.

One of the greatest issues, both Mohieldin and Kamal agree, is accurate, fair reporting on political and election-related issues. Freedom of the press continues to be a subject of great debate in Egypt. Journalists have lobbied for years to reverse a law that allows for the imprisonment of journalists who publish false, libelous or defamatory information without just cause.

President Mubarak said he would revise the law, but a ruling on the matter has been postponed, allegedly until after the elections. Kamal says it's a matter of proper training for journalists.

"We need a code of conduct to regulate how the media covers a campaign, not just the state owned media, but media in general and independent media also," he says. "What we are going through is a mess that doesn't exist anywhere in the world."

Classifieds

Three easy steps to write an ad that works

1. Attract the reader's attention. Always begin with the item for sale or wanted. i.e. Computer Compact, Intel inside etc.
2. List the best features of the item, brand name, model, price wanted. Keep your abbreviations to a minimum.
3. Make it easy for people to reply to your advert. Give your phone number and when you are available.

How to advertise?

1. BY PHONE: Telephone our Classified Dept. on (202) 7350802/0502. We are open Sunday to Thursday, 10 am to 5 pm.
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Price: LE 5 per word, minimum 40 words

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● **For rent:** Two bedroom apartment in Sharm El-Sheikh, air-conditioning, all extras, close to the beach. For more information please call 012 1056427.

● **For rent:** Chalet in Marina 70m2, 9th Area. Available for rent during the months of July and August. For more information please call 010 6500 027

● **For rent:** Relax! Beach, fresh air, abundant green area... Ein Sokhna, 45 minutes from Katameya, Luxurious 200 m2 Villa, in upscale resort. Brand new, 3 bedrooms, 3 baths, 1 maid's room. Overlooking lagoon, gardens and Red Sea. Perfect weekend getaway. Maid/Butler. Newly furnished. Best deal for annual agreement. 010-133-3714.

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Electronics

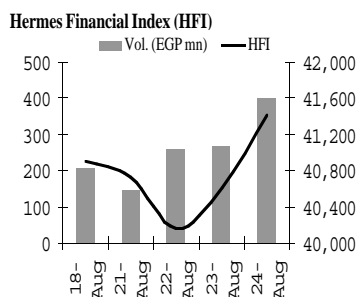
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24 August 2005 - Market Revives on Positive News

Most of the stocks on the Cairo and Alexandria Stock Exchanges performed well during today's session. Both the major indices, the HFI and EFGI, gained 2% to end the session at 41,415 and 22,034, respectively. The HFI witnessed 22 advancing stocks versus declining ones, leaving only two stocks flat. Market total traded value surged by 46% to EGP443 million on 10.4 million shares changing hands.

After EFG-Hermes denied the recent rumors regarding any changes in its senior management, the stock ended the session topping the gainers lists surging 8.3% to close at EGP41.60. The stock landed second on the turnover list trading EGP91 million. Orascom Telecom topped the turnover list trading a value of EGP96 million. The stock gained 3.2% to end the session at EGP29.35. The company announced that its 1H2005 results will be released at the beginning of next week. OCI landed third on the turnover list trading a value of EGP81 million. The stock climbed 1.5% to EGP172.90, following the company's announcement of the establishment of Ciments Blanc d'Algerie (CBA), a new white cement plant in Algeria. On the other hand, EFGI lost 3.2% to land on top of today's losers list, closing at EGP81.28.

Abbreviations	
FY	= Fiscal Year
Q	= Quarter
LQ	= Last Quarter
YTD	= Year to Date
12M	= Trailing Twelve Months
MCAP	= Market Capitalization
P/E	= Price / Earnings
P/B	= Price / Book
Yield	= Dividend Yield
EV	= Enterprise Value
EBITDA	= Earnings before Interest, Tax, Depreciation and Amortization



Day Close	Chg (%)	YTD (%)	Day High	Day Low	52-Wk High	52-Wk Low	Day Vol	M. Cap. mn	\$	Last FY	Last Q	2004	P/E (s)	TTM	2004	P/B (s)	LQ	2004	EV / EBITDA	TT	
Egypt																					
Building Materials and Construction																					
ASEC Cement	24.44	0.0	0.0	-	29.0	20.0	-	500	Dec-04	Dec-04	206.9	285.3	4.45	6.14	-	-	-	-	12.3		
Misr Beni Swaf Cement	66.07	3.0	83.4	67.0	65.9	67.0	28.1	0.5	229	Dec-04	Dec-04	25.6	17.5	5.07	5.33	1.2	9.4				
National Cement	27.94	4.5	22.1	28.1	27.2	33.4	13.8	0.3	500	Jun-04	Jun-04	104.9	104.9	27.31	27.31	-	-	21.8			
Qena Cement	49.38	5.2	80.8	50.8	48.0	50.8	26.2	1.3	257	Dec-04	Dec-04	18.5	18.5	3.46	3.46	2.5	11.6				
Sinai Cement	35.27	3.9	55.4	36.0	34.0	40.0	18.7	0.3	214	Dec-04	Dec-04	15.3	15.3	2.35	2.35	2.1	9.9				
Tourah Cement	90.17	2.4	14.5	90.2	90.0	96.2	61.7	0.0	373	Dec-04	Dec-04	15.5	15.5	2.70	2.70	0.0	8.6				
OCI	172.90	1.5	138.4	173.4	170.0	182.0	58.0	14.0	5,716	Dec-04	Mar-05	29.9	26.3	10.83	9.67	0.5	17.2				
AI Ezz Steel Rebars	32.11	0.4	33.7	32.5	31.9	36.3	8.3	2.6	479	Dec-04	Dec-04	13.8	13.8	6.17	6.17	-	14.8				
ANSKID	766.60	0.7	58.8	775.0	761.5	901.0	127.5	0.7	1,817	Dec-04	Dec-04	7.6	7.6	3.56	3.56	3.9	4.6				
PACHIN	32.01	0.0	-6.1	32.0	32.0	44.9	28.0	0.0	111	Jun-04	Jun-04	10.1	10.1	1.71	1.71	8.9	8.7				
Chemicals and Fertilizers																					
Abu Qir Fertilizers	100.08	-0.2	13.0	100.5	100.0	120.0	61.1	0.0	797	Jun-04	Dec-04	14.9	14.2	3.36	2.78	6.3	5.9				
EFIC	81.28	-3.2	82.2	84.0	79.0	98.0	36.1	0.0	183	Dec-04	Dec-04	20.1	20.1	1.86	1.86	3.7	12.1				
Sidi Kerir	97.83	0.3	0.0	98.5	97.0	125.5	81.3	1.2	1,782	Dec-04	Jun-05	14.0	13.6	7.83	6.14	5.1	10.4				
Consumer																					
EPICO	13.75	-1.5	37.8	13.8	13.7	17.5	9.2	0.2	172	Dec-04	Mar-05	9.1	8.5	1.19	1.14	8.7	3.6				
Olympic Group	21.60	1.4	26.5	21.9	21.0	27.0	14.3	0.0	205	Dec-04	Mar-05	11.8	14.3	1.84	1.79	3.7	7.8				
Eastern Company	185.99	0.5	43.0	187.8	185.0	220.0	85.3	0.3	807	Jun-04	Mar-05	17.6	13.9	3.81	2.69	3.8	6.6				
Lecico Egypt	108.00	0.0	0.0	-	-	111.0	104.0	-	375	Dec-04	Mar-05	13.4	16.9	3.40	3.04	2.8	10.4				
Oriental Weavers	66.61	-0.5	32.8	67.0	66.5	107.9	39.9	0.1	462	Dec-04	Mar-05	14.1	14.3	2.70	2.56	2.4	9.5				
Financial Services																					
CIB	47.50	1.1	21.9	47.6	47.0	52.0	24.8	1.0	1,071	Dec-04	Jun-05	13.8	12.4	2.91	2.57	3.7	-				
EAB	62.16	3.0	115.5	62.7	60.3	73.4	17.2	0.8	699	Dec-04	Jun-05	18.6	13.9	5.27	4.33	1.1	-				
EDBE	11.13	-0.3	8.7	11.2	11.0	15.2	10.0	0.0	116	Jun-04	Jun-04	19.2	19.2	0.85	0.85	6.7	-				
MBank	41.57	0.0	25.7	41.8	41.5	53.7	21.9	1.3	406	Dec-04	Jun-05	17.4	17.1	1.92	1.94	3.6	-				
NSGB	61.12	1.6	35.9	62.0	60.5	68.0	31.0	0.6	700	Dec-04	Jun-05	17.5	14.6	4.86	4.11	3.4	-				
EFG-Hermes HC	41.60	8.3	208.1	43.4	39.7	46.8	8.0	15.7	585	Dec-04	Dec-04	64.7	64.7	6.84	6.84	0.4	30.0				
Egyptian Kuwaiti	3.52	-1.1	5.4	3.6	3.5	3.9	2.9	0.6	466	Dec-04	Dec-04	15.8	15.8	2.47	2.47	2.8	19.2				
Other																					
Canal Shipping	5.00	4.8	10.1	5.0	4.9	8.4	2.8	0.3	173	Jun-04	Mar-05	25.5	25.5	3.56	3.53	3.2	255.9	2			
Real Estate and Hotels																					
Media Prod. City	9.39	1.2	-29.8	9.5	9.3	19.9	9.0	0.2	280	Dec-04	Dec-04	30.4	30.4	0.81	0.81	-	15.1				
Nasr City Housing	44.01	4.0	-11.9	44.0	44.0	75.0	42.0	0.0	122	Jun-04	Mar-05	13.2	9.8	3.80	2.87	4.5	7.0				
OHD	34.17	1.5	175.6	34.7	33.8	61.7	8.1	8.0	451	Dec-04	Mar-05	37.7	26.1	4.86	4.57	-	15.0				
Telecoms & IT																					
MobiNil	182.11	1.4	41.9	183.9	180.0	206.0	89														