

GAMAL ABDEL-NASSER

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GAMAL ABD EL-NASSER

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE REVOLUTION

BOOK I

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Gamal Abd El-Nasser

INTRODUCTION

These impressions on the Philosophy of the Revolution were not meant to be published as a book.

Neither are they an attempt to explain the objectives of the Revolution of July 23rd and its events.

They aim at something else altogether.

They are like a reconnaissance-patrol. They are an effort to explore within ourselves who we are and what our role in the successive stages of the history of Egypt really is.

They are an attempt to explore the conditions surrounding us, past, present and future, and find out the path along which we can proceed.

They are an effort to find out the objectives we should aim at and the energy we should mobilise to achieve those objectives.

They are an attempt to discover the pattern of our environment so that we should know that we do not live on an isolated island surrounded with water on every side.

Such is the object I aim at : A mere patrol in the field in which we are fighting our greatest battle for the liberation of our country from all fetters and shackles.

PART I.

It is not philosophy — Attempts which failed — It is not a mere mutiny — We were in Palestine and our dreams in Egypt — Ahmed Abdel Aziz before his death — A lesson from Israel — Schoolboy-days — Truth and leisure — Why was it essential that the Army should move? — The complete picture — The Vanguard and the mass-formations — Ideal aspirations — A typical member of the Revolution Council — Psychological Crisis — Two revolutions at the same time — Lest there should be an accident on the way.

Before proceeding with this discourse I would like to pause for a while at the word "Philosophy" It looks big and sounds grand. As I see it, I feel I am facing a world that has no boundaries. I have within me a surreptitious feeling hindering me from plunging into a bottomless sea. From the shore I stand upon, I see at the distance no end to the other side. The truth is I am anxious to avoid the use of the word "Philosophy" with reference to what I shall say. I find it difficult to discuss the Philosophy of the Revolution for two reasons: First, the Philosophy of the Revolution of July 23rd should be treated by professors who should search deeply into it for the roots spreading at the very depth of the history of our people. The stories of national struggles have no gaps that can be filled with nonsense. Neither have they the surprises that spring into existence without preludes.

The struggle of any nation in its successive generations is a structure that rises one stone upon another. And as each stone lies solidly on another, so do the events of the struggle. Each event is the outcome of its predecessors, and is, at the same time, an introduction to something still in the lap of the unknown.

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I do not pretend to be a professor of history. This is the last thing my imagination may entertain. Nevertheless, if I were to attempt to study the story of our struggle like a school-boy just beginning I would say, for instance, that the revolution of July 23rd is the realisation of a hope that the people of Egypt, in modern times, have aspired to since they began to think of governing themselves and since they decided to be the masters of their fate.

One attempt failed to realise this hope when El Sayyed Omar Makram led the movement for appointing Mohamed Aly vice-roy of Egypt in the name of its people.

Another attempt failed to fulfil this aspiration when Arabi rose demanding a constitution.

Other vain attempts followed during the intellectual fervour in the period between the revolt of Arabi and the Revolution of 1919. This latter was led by Saad Zaghloul who again failed to reach his goal.

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It is not true that the revolution of July 23rd started on account of the results of the war in Palestine. Neither was it caused by defective arms, to which officers and men fell victims. It is still further from the truth to attribute it to the crisis of the elections of the Officers' Club. In my opinion its causes are deeper and farther. Had the officers endeavoured to avenge themselves because they were cheated

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in Palestine or because the defective arms strained their nerves and because they suffered an indignity in the elections of the Officers' Club, the whole affair would not have deserved to be called a revolution. A mere mutiny was the likely description even if it were attributed to causes fair and just in themselves. All these were incidental. Perhaps their greatest influence was that they urged us to march forward along the road to revolution; but without them we were marching just the same.

Today I am trying to recall all the events that passed and, after years have elapsed since we first thought of the revolution, to go back to the first day I discovered the seeds of revolt within me. That day lies farther in my life than November 1951, which marked the beginning of the crisis of the Officers' Club elections. The organisation of the Liberal Officers was then existing and active. I do not exaggerate when I say that the crisis of the Officers' Club elections was caused, more than anything else, by the activities of the Liberal Officers. We were determined to fight then in order to test the strength of our mass formation and real organisation.

That day lies again farther in my life than the beginning of the scandal of defective arms. The Liberal Officers' Organisation had existed before. Their circulars gave the first warning of the impending tragedy. Behind the uproar that rose on account of the defective arms their activities lay. Nay, that day goes back still farther in my

life than May 16, 1944 which marked the start of my life in the Palestine War. As I trace the details of our experience in Palestine I feel a strange sensation. We were fighting in Palestine but our dreams were in Egypt. Our bullets were aimed at the enemy lurking in the trenches in front of us, but our hearts were hovering round our distant Mother Country, which was then a prey to the wolves that ravaged it. In Palestine Liberal Officers' cells were meeting in trenches and posts studying and searching. And it was in Palestine that Salah Salem and Zakaria Mohyy-el-Din came to me after having penetrated the siege of Falouga; there we sat besieged neither knowing what to become of that siege nor when would it end. We spoke of nothing but our country and how to deliver it. It was in Palestine that Kamal El Dine Hussein sat beside me one day and spoke as his eyes wandered and his thoughts dispersed; "Do you know what Ahmad Abdel Aziz had told me before he died ?" He asked. "What did he say ?" I asked in return. With a deep tone of voice and still deeper look he said, "Listen Kamal, Egypt is the field of our supreme war effort."

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In Palestine I met not only friends that shared the work for Egypt, but there I also discovered the thoughts that shed their light on the road ahead. I remember the days I spent in trenches pondering over our problems. Falouga was

then besieged and the enemy had concentrated his guns and aircraft heavily and terribly upon it. Often have I said to myself, "Here we are in these underground holes besieged. How we were cheated into a war unprepared and how our destinies have been the plaything of passions, plots and greed. Here we lay under fire unarmed."

As I reached that stage in my thinking my feelings would suddely jump across the battlefront, across frontiers to Egypt. I found myself saying, "There is our Mother-Country, a far, far bigger Falouga. What is happening in Palestine is but a miniature picture of what was happening in Egypt. Our Mother-Country has been likewise besieged by difficulties as well as ravaged by an enemy. She was cheated and pushed to fight unprepared. Greed, intrigue and passion have toyed with it and left it under fire unarmed."

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Besides, it was not only the friends I met in Palestine who spoke to me of the future of our country, not only the experience that I had gathered there that hammered at my mind with warnings and forebodings as to its destiny; but the enemy also played his part in reminding us of our homeland and its difficulties. A few months ago I read some articles written upon me by a Jewish officer named Yerdan Cohen. These were published in the Jewish Observer. In these articles he related how he met me during the contacts and

discussions of the Armistice. "The subject that Gamal Abd-el-Nasser discussed with me," he stated, "was Israel's struggle against the English, how we organised our underground resistance in Palestine and how we succeeded in mobilising world public opinion behind us against them."

The day I discovered the seeds of revolt within me was still further back than February 4, 1942. I wrote to a friend later saying, "What is to be done now that the catastrophe has befallen us, and after we have accepted it, surrendered to it and taken it submissively and meekly." "I really believe," I continued, "that Imperialism is playing a one-card game in order to threaten only. If ever it knew that there were Egyptians ready to shed their blood and to meet force by force it would withdraw and recoil like a harlot. This, of course, is the state or habit of Imperialism everywhere." That event had a new influence on the spirit and feeling of the army and ourselves. Henceforth officers spoke not of curruption and pleasure, but of sacrifice and of their willingness to give up their lives to save their country's dignity. They all repented they did not intervene, however weak they may have obviously been, to redeem their country's honour and to wash this shame away with their very blood. But let us wait. Tomorrow will soon be here.

Some have tried to revenge this but the time for revenge had gone. Hearts were full of fire and sorrow.

The fact is that that blow brought life back to some and made them realise that they should be prepared to defend

their honour. That, in itself, was a severe lesson.

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That day is again far more distant in my life than the feverish days I lived as a student, marching in demonstrations, clamouring for the restoration of the 1923 constitution which was duly restored in 1935, and when I used to join delegations of students calling on leaders in their homes and demanding from them to unite for the sake of Egypt; and as a result of these efforts the National Front was formed in 1936. I remember that during the period of boiling over I wrote on September 2nd 1935 to a friend of mine, now Dr. Aly El Nashar, the following letter :

Brother Aly,

On August 30th I telephoned your father enquiring after you. He informed me you were at school. I therefore decided to write what I had intended to convey to you by telephone. The Lord hath said, "Prepare for them (the enemy) whatever force you can", but where is that force we prepare ? The present situation is critical and Egypt is in a still more critical position. We are just about to bid life farewell and meet death. Despair is a solid structure; and who is to demolish it ? And then I went on until I finished the letter.

I wonder when it was that I discovered the seeds of revolt within me. I consider, moreover, that such seeds were

not embedded in my heart alone and that I found them in the very hearts of others who could not themselves trace them to their origin in themselves. It seems clear that these seeds were innate in us; they lay dormant and inherited in our souls, a legacy from a previous generation.

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Now that I proceeded after all this to explain why at first I found it difficult to talk about the philosophy of the revolution and mentioned that such talk needs professors to delve into the depths of our history and trace the roots therein planted. The second reason was that I myself was amidst that whirlwind of the revolution. Those who are at the depths of the whirlwind are hardly conscious of whatever is away from it.

It was thus that my faith and my mind were following everything that happened, how it happened, and therefore I cannot divest myself from my soul when I discuss the events and what hidden ideas are at their roots.

I firmly believe that nothing can live in a vacuum. The truth that lies latent in our depths is this : whatever we imagine to be the truth is, in fact, the truth plus the contents of our souls; our souls are but the vessels wherein lives everything in us and the shape of this vessel gives form to whatever is introduced into it, even facts.

I try, as is humanly possible, to check myself from changing

the form of the truth, and I am sure I shall succeed to a considerable extent.

There is the question; and to do justice to myself and to the philosophy of the revolution I leave it to history to gather how it was within me, how it was within others and how it appeared in events; and from all these the whole truth will emerge.

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What is it then I would like to discuss if I eliminate the world "philosophy". ? I have but two things to mention in this connection. First are some feelings taking a vague form of a hope at the beginning and later becoming a definite idea and a practical plan prior to midnight July 23rd. Secondly are some experiences that carried those feelings with their vague hope, their definite idea and practical plan into execution at midnight July 23rd and onwards until now.

It is these feelings and experiences that I would like to discuss. One question has persistently occurred to me; Was it our duty, as an army, to do what we did on july 23rd 1952 ? I have just explained how the revolution of July 23rd was the realisation of a hope that dangled before the eyes of the people of Egypt since they began, in modern times, to think of governing themselves and having the final word on their destiny.

If this be so, and if what took place on July 23rd, was

only a military mutiny and not a popular revolt, why was the army then, apart from any other forces, destined to carry out this revolution ?

Throughout my life I have had faith in militarism. The soldier's sole duty is to die on the frontiers of his country. Why then was our army compelled to act in the capital and not on the frontier ?

Once more, let me reiterate that the defeat in Palestine, the defective arms, the crisis of the Officers' Club election were not the real springs from which the current flowed. They may have accelerated the flood but they could never be the original source. Why then did this duty fall upon the army ? This question has often occurred to me. It came to me persistently during the stage of hoping, of thinking and of planning before July 23rd. It repeated itself several times during the experimental period after July 23rd. We had different factors to justify action before July 23rd and to explain to us why wasit imperative that the army should act. "If the army does not move" we said to ourselves, "who else will ?" We were the ghost with which the tyrant haunted the dreams of the nation. It was high time that the same ghost turned against the tyrant and upset his dreams. Other things we said; but what was most significant of all is the feeling deep down in our consciousness, that this was our duty. If we did not perform it we would betray the sacred trust in our charge. I admit that the complete picture was not yet very vivid in my imagination until I went through

a long stage of experience after July 23rd. The very details of this experience were in themselves the very details of the picture.

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I confess that after July 23rd I suffered fits in which I accused myself, my colleagues and the rest of the army of rashness and folly we committed on July 23rd.

Prior to that date I imagined that the whole nation was on tip-toes and prepared for action, that it awaited the advance of the vanguard and the storming of the outside walls for it to pour down in a solid phalanx marching faithfully to the great goal. I thought we were only the pioneers and the commandoes, that we would only be in the front for a few hours, and that we would be soon followed by the solid masses marching to the goal. My imagination often carried me away. I felt I could hear the rattle of their solid, orderly rows as they marched onwards to the main front. My faith was such as to render everything I heard a concrete fact and not a mere vision.

After July 23rd I was shocked by the reality. The vanguard performed its task; it stormed the walls of the fort of tyranny; it forced Farouk to abdicate and stood by expecting the mass formations to arrive at their ultimate object. It waited and waited. Endless crouds showed up, but how different is the reality from the vision ! The multitudes that arrived were dispersed followers and contrasted

remnants. The holy march towards the great goal was interrupted. A dismal picture, horrible and threatening, then presented itself. I felt my heart charged with sorrow and dripping with bitterness. The mission of the vanguard had not ended. In fact it was just beginning at that very hour. We needed discipline but found chaos behind our lines. We needed unity but found dissentions. We needed action but found nothing but surrender and idleness. It was from this source and no other that the revolution derived its motto.

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We did not expect this shock. We went to the men of ideas for counsel and to the men of experience for guidance, but unfortunately we did not find much of either. Every leader we came to wanted to assassinate his rival. Every idea we found aimed at the destruction of another. If we were to carry out all that we heard, then there would not be one leader left alive. Not one idea would remain intact. We would cease to have a mission save to remain among the smashed bodies and the broken debris lamenting our misfortune and reproaching our ill-fate.

Complaints and petitions poured upon us in thousands. If these did refer to cases worthy of jutsice, or mentioned oppression that might be redressed, they would be understandable and logical. The majority of these were but persistent demands for revenge as if the revolution were

meant to be a weapon for revenge and hatred.

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If I were asked then what I required most my instant answer would be "To hear but one Egyptian uttering one word of justice about another, to see but one Egyptian not devoting his time to criticise wilfully the ideas of another, to feel that there was but one Egyptian ready to open his heart for forgiveness, indulgence and loving his brother Egyptians. Personal and persistent selfishness was the rule of the day. The word "I" was on every tongue. It was the magic solution of every difficulty and the effective cure for every malady. Often did I meet men, referred to in the press as "great men", of various tendencies and colours, from whom I sought the solution of a difficult problem. I could hear nothing from them save the word "I". He and only he was capable of understanding the problems of economics; the rest were but children creeping on all fours. He and only he was the expert statesman and the rest only learning their a & b and had not got to c. After interviewing any of these men I would go back to my colleagues bitterly exclaiming "How utterly futile...! If we were to ask that man about a difficulty in fishing off the Islands of Hawaii his answer would only be "I".

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I remember I once visited one of our universities and sat with professors endeavouring to profit by the experience of men of learning. Many spoke and spoke at length. Unfortunately not one of them presented a new idea. Every one introduced himself and listed his moral capacities which, in his view, could perform miracles. Every one eyed me as if I were to him more precious than the treasures of earth or the blessings of eternity. I could not help but remark to them all "Everyone in his place can perform miracles. The primary duty is to put all energy into it and if you, as university professors, ever thought of students and rendered them, as you should, your principal care, you would provide us with a tremendous force wherewith to build up our country. Let every one remain at his post and strive hard at it. Do not look up to us. Circumstances have compelled us to leave our posts to perform a sacred task. We sincerely wish the country has no further use for us save as professional soldiers in the army. There we would have remained. I did not wish then to set before them the example of the members of the Revolution Council who, before the crisis summoned them for the supreme task, were performing their duties in the army most diligently. I did not wish tell them that most of the members of the Revolution Council were professors in the Staff-College... a clear proof of their distinction as professional soldiers. Neither did I wish to mention to them that three members of the Revolution Council had received promotion on the field in Palestine, lest I should be regarded

as if I were boasting of my brethren and colleagues of the Revolution Council.

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I admit the situation caused me a depressing psychological crisis. But later, experience and reflection, and the true significance I derived from them lightened the reaction of the crisis upon me and made me seek pretexts from the world of reality that came to me when the complete picture of the state of my country became clear to me. It, moreover, provided me with the answer to the question which was always in my mind. That question is : "Was it our duty, the Army's duty, to act as it did on July 23rd ?" The unavoidable and unescapable answer is "Yes".

I can now say that we are at present in the throes of two revolutions and not one.

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Every nation on earth undergoes two revolutions : One political, in which it recovers its right for self government from an imposed despot, or an agressive army occupying its territory without its consent. The second revolution is social, in which the classes of society would struggle against each other until justice for all countrymen has been gained and conditions have become stable.

Other nations have preceded us along the path of human progress and passed through the two revolutions but not simultaneously. Hundreds of years separated the one from the other. In the case of our nation, it is going through the two revolutions together and at the same time, a great experiment putting us to the test. This great experiment is due to the fact that the conditions of each revolution are remarkably different, strangely discordent and terrifically clashing. Political revolution demands, for its success, the unity of all national elements, their fusion and mutual support, as well as self-denial for the sake of the country as a whole.

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One of the first signs of social revolution is that values are shaken and creeds are relaxed; fellow-countrymen struggle against each other, individuals and classes. Corruption, suspicion, hatred and selfishness dominate them. Between the anvil and the hammer we now live in two revolutions : one demanding that we should unite together, love one another and strain every nerve to reach our goal; the other forces us, inspite of ourselves, to disperse and give way to hatred, everyone thinking only of himself.

Between the anvil and the hammer the 1919 Revolution was lost and failed to achieve the results which it ought to have realised. The ranks that massed in 1919 to face tyranny were, after a while, occupied only by internal strife. Tyranny

became more arbitrary whether it was in the form of the open forces of occupation or their veiled cat's paws, headed by sultan Fouad and later by his son Farouk. The nation reaped nothing but a crop of self-suspicion, egoism and hatred, between individuals and classes alike. The hopes which the 1919 revolution was expected to realise faded. The fact that they faded and that they did not die out is due to that natural resistance which the hopes that our nation always entertained, bring forth. This resistance was still alive then and preparing for another trial. Such was the state of affairs that prevailed after the 1919 Revolution and which compelled the army to be the only force capable of action.

The situation demanded that a homogeneous force should emerge away, to a certain extent, from the struggle of individuals and classes. This force should issue from the heart of the people. Its members should have faith in each other and should have in their hands such elements of material force as to ensure swift and decisive action. Such conditions did not prevail except in the army.

It was not the army, as I mentioned, that determined its role in the events. The opposite is nearer the truth. It was the events and their evolution that determined for the army its role in the mighty struggle for the liberation of the country.

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I have realised from the very beginning that our success depended on our complete understanding of the nature of the conditions we live in as related to our national history. We were not in a position to change these conditions by a mere stroke of the pen. We were not also in a position to put back or put forward the hands of the clock and dominate time. We could not act, along the route of history, as the traffic constable does on the road by stopping the passage of one revolution to let through another, and therefore avoid a collision. The only thing to do was to act as best we could, and escape being crushed between the two mill-stones.

It was imperative that we should proceed with the two revolutions together. The day we marched along the path of political revolution and dethroned Farouk we took a similar step along the path of social revolution by limiting the ownership of agricultural land. I still believe until today that the revolution of July 23rd should retain its capacity for swift action and initiative in order that it may fulfill the miracle of proceeding with the two revolutions simultaneously, contradictory as our action may appear to be sometimes.

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When a friend of mine came to me one day exclaiming, "You asked for unity to face the English and at the same time you permit the Graft Court to proceed with its work". I listened to him with the image of our big crisis in my mind:

the crisis of being between the two mill-stones. One revolution demanded that we should stand in one row and forget the past, another revolution forcing us to restore the lost dignity of moral values and not forget the past.

I did not say to my friend that the only way out to safety was, as I mentioned, the capacity for swift action and initiative as well as the capacity for marching along the two paths together.

This was not my will; nor was it the will of those who took part in the revolution of July 23rd. It was the will of fate, of the history of our nation and the stage it is passing through today.

PART II.

Positive action — Enthusiasm is not enough — Bullets speak — Crying and wailing in the night — How easy to shed blood — Roots in history — God almighty! God Almighty! — Steel collapses — This society will crystalise — People's nerves and minds — We have angered every body — These are our limitations and that is our duty.

What is it we want to do ? And which is the way to it ?

The truth is that I often knew the answer to the first question. Such knowledge was not confined to me; it was the hope that our whole generation has unanimously held.

As for the answer to the second question; namely the way to that which we want, I confess it has undergone in my mind as many changes as nothing else has done. I almost believe that it is the biggest bone of contention in this generation.

There is no doubt we all dream of Egypt free and strong. No Egyptian would ever differ with another about that.

As for the way to liberation and strength, that is the most intricate problem in our lives. I had faced this complex problem prior to July 23rd 1952. I continued to face it after that, until its many angles, which had lain hidden under the shadows that fell upon them, became clear to me. I began to behold horizons which were shrowded out of my sight by the pall of darkness that fell on our country for centuries.

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I have felt, since conciousness first dawned within me, that positive action is the only way. But what action ? The word positive action may appear on paper sufficient to solve the problem. But, in life as well as in the difficult circumstances our generation has been going through and,

in this crisis that ravaged deeply by into the destinies of our country, it was not sufficient. At one stage of my life enthusiasm meant positive action as a means of appreciating. Then my ideal in positive action changed until I came to realise that it was not enough that my nerves alone should cry out, and that I must communicate my enthusiasm to others until their nerves also cry out.

In those days I was at the head of demonstrations in Al Nahda School. From the bottom of my heart I clamoured demanding complete independence; others repeated my cries; but these were in vain.

They were blown away by the winds and became faint echoes that do not move mountains or smash rocks. Later "positive action" meant in my opinion that all leaders of Egypt should unite on one thing. Our rebellious cheering crowds passed their homes one by one demanding, in the name of the youth of Egypt, that they should unite on one thing. It was a tragedy to my faith that the one thing they united on was the Treaty of 1936.

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Then came the second World War and the events that preceded it. Both inflamed our youth and spread fire to its innermost feelings. We, the whole generation, began to move towards violence. I confess, and I hope the Attorney-General will not incriminate me on account of this confession, that political assassinations blazed in my enflamed mind

during that period as the only positive action from which we could not escape, if we were to save the future of our country.

I thought of assassinating many whom I regarded as obstacles between our country and its future. I began to expose their crimes and set myself as a judge of their actions and of the harm that these brought upon the country; and then I would follow all this by the sentence that should be passed upon them.

I thought of assassinating the ex-King and those of his men who tempered with our sacred traditions. In this I was not alone. When I sat with others our thoughts passed from thinking to planning. Many a design did I draw up those days. Many a night did I lie awake preparing the means for the expected positive action. Our life was, during this period, like an exciting detective story. We had great secrets; we had symbols; we hid in the darkness and arranged our pistols and bombs side by side. Those were the hope we dreamt of. We made many attempts in this direction and I still remember, until to-day, our feelings and emotions as we dashed along the road to its end.

The truth, however, is I did not feel at ease within myself to consider violence as the positive action essential for the salvation of our country's future. I had within me a feeling of distraction which was a mixture of complex and intermingled factors : of patriotism, religion, compassion, cruelty, faith, suspicion, knowledge and ignorance.

Slowly and gently did the idea of political assassination which was blazing in my imagination, begin to die out and lose its value within me as the realization of the expected positive action.

I remember one night in particular which was decisive in directing my thoughts and my dreams along that channel. We had prepared everything necessary for action. We selected one, whom we found essential to put out of the way. We studied the circumstances of the life of this individual, and made the plot in detail. This plot was to shoot him as he returned home at night. We organised a squad of assault which would shoot him, another to guard this first and a third to organise the plan of getting away to safety after the plot had been fully carried out.

The appointed night came and I went out myself with the squad of execution. Everything went to plan as we imagined.

The scene was empty, as we had expected. The squads lay in the hiding places fixed for them. The person whom we wanted to get out of the way came and bullets were fired at him. The squad of execution withdrew, covered in its retreat by the guards, and the operation of getting away began. I started my motor car and dashed away from the scene of the positive action we planned. Cries, wailings and moans suddenly rang in my ears. The wailing of a woman, the voice of a scared child and the continuous feverish appeals for help assailed my ears. I was steeped

in my rebelious set of emotions as my car rushed me along. I then became conscious of something strange; the sounds I heard were still tearing my ears, as well as the cries, wails and moans and the feverish appeals for help. I was then away from the scene, further than sound could reach. Nevertheless I felt all these beginning to haunt and chase me.

I got home, threw myself on bed, my mind in a fever, my heart and conscience incessantly boiling. The cries, moans and wails and the appeals for help still rang in my ears. All night long I could not sleep. I lay on my bed in darkness, lighting one cigarette after another, wandering away with my rebellious thoughts which were driven away by the sounds that haunted me. "Was I right ?" I asked myself. With conviction I answered "My motives were patriotic." "Was this an unavoidable means ?" I again asked myself. In doubt I replied : "What could we have done otherwise ? Is it possible that the future of our country could change by getting rid of this one individual or another ? Is not the question far deeper than this". In bewilderment I would say to myself : I almost feel that the question is deeper. We dream of the glory of a nation. Which is more important ? That some one should pass away who should pass away or that someone should come who should come.

As I mention this I see rays of light gradually filtering through these crowded sensations. "What is important", I would say to myself, "is that someone should come who should come. We are dreaming of the glory of a nation :

A glory that must be built up". As I tossed on my bed in a room full of smoke and charged with emotions, I found myself asking : "And then ?". "And what then ?", a mysterious voice called out. With deep conviction this time I again said to myself, "Our method must change. This is not the positive action we should aim at. The roots of the question go more deeply. The problem is more serious and more far-reaching." At this I felt an undiluted relief which was soon dispersed by the cries, moans, wails and appeals whose echoes resounded inside me. Suddenly I found myself exclaiming, "I wish he would not die." It was indeed strange that dawn would find me wishing life for someone I wished he was dead the night before. I rushed anxiously to the morning papers. I was happy to find that the individual whose assassination I plotted was destined to live.

But this was not the fundamental problem. The principal question is to find out the positive action. Since then we began to think of something more deeply rooted, more serious and more far-reaching. We began to draw the preliminary lines of the vision that was realised in the night of July 23rd, namely a revolution springing from the very heart of the people, charged with its aspirations and pursuing completely the steps it had previously taken along its destined path.

I began this discourse with two questions : One was this : "What is it we want to do ?" and the second, "Which is the way to what we want to do ?" The answer of the first

question, as I mentioned, was a hope unanimonsly held The answer of the second question, about the way to do what we want, I discussed at length until July 23rd.

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But was what happened on July 23rd all that we wanted to do ? The answer is emphatically "No", since that was only the first step along the road.

The ectasy of success on July 23rd did not really deceive me. It did not appear to me as if it had realised our hopes or that spring had come. The opposite may be the truth. Every moment carried to me a fresh success of the revolution, but it also laid unwittingly a heavy burden upon my shoulders. I mentioned in Part I. of this discourse that before July 23rd I thought the whole nation was standing on tip-toes and ready for action and that it had awaited but the storming of the walls by the vanguard for it to rush forward behind the vanguard in mass formations marching orderly onwards. I stated that our role as a vanguard could not take but a few minutes to perform, after which we would be followed by the massed regular forces. I also drew up in that part of the picture the disputes, chaos, hatred and passions which were let loose, each trying by its egoism to exploit the revolution for its purposes. I said and I shall go on saying that this was the most cruel shock I ever felt in my life. But I admit I should have expected all that happened since it was impossible to fulfil our dreams by merely pressing an

electric button, and since it was impossible that the scum and debris of centuries could disappear in the twinkle of an eye.

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It was easy then, and I still find it easy now, to shed the blood of ten, twenty, or thirty persons in order to strike fear and panic in the hearts of many hesitants, and thus force them to swallow their passions, their hatred, and their whims. But what result could such an action achieve ? I used to think that the only way to face a problem was to trace it to its origin and to try to follow the source from which it began. It was not just to impose "The Reign of Blood" upon us, regardless of the historical circumstances which our nation has been through and which left its imprint upon us and made us what we are to-day. I said once that I did not pretend to be a professor of history; for this is the last thing my imagination would aspire to. I said that I would make my attempts only as a child beginning his history course at school.

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Fate has so willed that we should be on the crossroads of the world. Often have we been the road which invaders took and a prey to adventurers. In certain circumstances we found it impossible to explain the factors latent in the soul of our nation without due consideration of these circumstances.

In my opinion we cannot overlook the history of Egypt under the Pharaos or the reaction between the Greek spirit and ours, the Roman invasion, and Muslim conquest and the waves of Arab migrations that followed.

I believe we should pause for a time and examine the circumstances we went through in the middle ages; for it is these that got us up to the stage we are in to-day.

If the Crusades were the dawn of a renaissance in Europe they were also the commencement of the dark ages in our country. Our nation has borne the brunt of the Crusades. They left it exhausted, poverty-stricken and destitute. At the same time that it was menaced by the war, it suffered tyranny and lay prostrate under the spikes of the horses of the despots of Inner Asia. These were slaves when they first came. Then they turned against their masters and replaced them as princes. They were brought to Egypt in droves as Mameluke slaves and after spending a time in this good and peaceful country they became kings. Tyranny, oppression and destruction became the characteristic feature of their rule which enveloped Egypt in its blackness for centuries. During that period our country became a forest ruled by wild beasts. The Mamelukes looked upon it as an easy prey. Their struggles turned on the partitioning of the booty. Our souls, our wealth and our land were the spoil.

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Often, when I go back to turning the pages of our history, I feel sorrow tearing my soul as I consider the period when

a tyrannical feudalism was formed, a feudalism which had no other object save sucking the blood of life out of our veins and sapping from these veins the remnants of any feeling of power and of dignity. It left in the depth of our souls an effect that we have to struggle long to overcome.

In point of fact, when I visualise this effect I feel I can understand, on most occasions, some of the symptoms of our political life.

It often appears to me that many adopt, towards the revolution, an attitude of spectators who have no other interest except waiting to see the result of the battle in which two sides, with whom they have not the least connection, are struggling. I often rebel against this attitude and say to myself and to some of my friends : "Why don't they come forward ? Why don't they emerge from the hiding-places, wherein they put themselves, to speak and move.

I do not find an explanation for this save the deposits of the Mameluke reign, when princes used to wrestle against each other, and when horsemen fought in the streets, while people rushed to their homes locking themselves therein, in order to be away from the fight which did not concern them.

It often appears to me that we resort to our imagination and demand that it should fulfil our desires in the sphere of fancy; we enjoy this fancy and thus rest too inactive to try to realise it.

Many of us have not yet rid themselves of this feeling;

they have not assimilated the idea that this country is theirs and that they are its masters and the leaders of opinion and the proper authorities therein.

I have endeavoured once to understand an expression I used often to shout as a child when I saw planes flying in the sky. I used to say :

"Oh, God Almighty ! Would that a calamity betake the English !" I found out later that we inherited the expression from our forefathers in the days of the Mamelukes. It was not then applied to the English, but it was modified by us or by the unchanged and latent deposits in us. We only changed the name of the oppressor. Our forefathers used to say, "O God Almighty ! Send the Osmanly to perdition.!"

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In the same unchanged spirit the idea was often expressed by our tongues. The name English replaced the name Osmanli, in accordance with the political changes that subsequently followed upon Egypt between the two epochs.

Then what happened after the Mameluke period ? The French expedition came. The iron curtain that the Tartars imposed upon us was torn away. New ideas poured upon us. New horizons, hitherto unkown to us, opened.

The Dynasty of Mohamed Aly inherited all the conditions of Mameluke life, even though it endeavoured to dress them in the fashionable clothes of the nineteenth century. Our contacts with Europe and the world were resumed anew.

Consciousness, in a modern sense, dawned upon us and brought with it a new crisis.

We were, in my opinion, like a patient who spent too long a time in a closed chamber. Heat inside the closed chamber became such that the patient got almost suffocated. Suddenly a storm raged and wrecked the windows and doors. Cold draughts rushed in lashing the body of the patient, still soaked in perspiration. The patient was in need of a breath of air. Instead a violent cyclone burst upon him and fever ravaged his exhausted body.

This is exactly what happened to our society. It was a really dangerous experiment. European society had passed through the stages of its evolution in an orderly manner. It crossed the bridge between the Renaissance at the end of the Middle Ages and the Nineteenth Century step by step. The stages of this evolution systematically succeeded one another. In our case everything was sudden. We lived behind an iron curtain which suddenly collapsed. We were cut off from the world; we renounced its life especially after trade with the East was derouted to the Cape of Good Hope. European countries eyed us covetously and regarded us as a crossroad to their colonies in the East and the South.

Torrents of ideas and opinions burst upon us which we were, at that stage of our evolution, incapable of assimilating. Our spirits were still in the Thirteenth Century though the symptoms of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries infiltrated in their various aspects. Our minds were trying to catch up the advancing caravan of humanity from which

we fell back five centuries or more. The course was exhausting and the race was terrible and horrible.

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There is no doubt that this state of affairs was responsible for the absence of a united public opinion in our country. The gulf between one individual and another and one generation and another, became particularly wide.

At one time I complained that people did not know what they wanted. They were not unanimous in their choice of the way to take. I realised later that I demanded the impossible and that I took no account of the circumstances of our society.

We live in a society that has not yet crystallised. It is still boiling over and restless. It has not yet calmed or settled down, so as to continue its gradual evolution parallel with other nations which preceded it along the road.

I believe, without paying any compliment to people's emotions, that our nation has realised a miracle. Any nation, exposed to the same conditions as our country, could be easily lost. It could be swept away be the torrents that fell upon it. But it stood firm in the violent earthquake.

It is true we nearly lost our equillibrium in some circumstances; but generally we did not fall to the ground. As I consider one normal Egyptian family out of the thousands that live in the capital, I find the following : the father, for example, is a turbanned 'fellah' from the heart of the country; the mother a lady descended from Turkish stock; the sons

of the family are at a school adopting the English system; the daughters the French. All this lies between the Thirteenth century and the outward appearances of the Twentieth.

As I see this I feel within me I can comprehend the bewilderment and the confusion that assail us. Then I say to myself, "This society will crystallise; its component parts will hold together; it will form a homogeneous entity; but this necessitates that we should strain our nerves during the period of transition."

Such are, then, the roots from which sprang our conditions of today. Such are the sources from which our crisis flows. If I add to these social origins the circumstances for which we expelled Farouk and for which we wish to liberate our country from every foreign soldier; if we add all these together, we shall discover the wide sphere in which we labour and which is exposed, from every side, to the winds, to the violent storm that raged in its corners, to flashing lightning and roaring thunder. As I stated, it is not fair that a "Reign of Blood" should be imposed upon us in this sphere, if we take all these circumstances and conditions into consideration.

Therefore, one may ask, "Which is the way ? and what is our role in it ? The way is that which leads to economic and political freedom.

Our role is the role of the watchmen only, no more and no less, watchmen for a definite period with a time limit.

How similar is our nation today to a caravan, that had to take a certain route! the route was long; thieves and

highwaymen attacked it; it was led astray by the mirage; and finally the caravan dispersed, each group wandering to a different place and every individual taking a different direction.

How similar is our mission in these circumstances to the part of someone going out of his way to gather these wandering lost way-farers in order to put them again on the right track and leave them to proceed with their march!

This is our part, and I cannot imagine any other. If it occurred to me to solve all the problems of our country, I should be a dreamer; and I am not fond of clinging to dreams.

We have neither the capacity to do this nor the experience to achieve it. Our job is, as I said, to define the land-marks of the road, to lead the wanderers back to where they would resume their march, and to catch up with those who were persuing the mirage and convince them of the futility of chasing the mirage as they do.

I fully knew, from the beginning, that our mission would not be an easy one and that it would cost us much of our popularity. We have to speak frankly and speak straight to the minds of the people. Our predecessors used to offer people nothing but dreams, and utter nothing but what people liked to hear.

How easy it is to speak to people's instincts and how difficult to address their minds! Our instincts are the same, but our minds are subject to diversity and disparity. Egyptian

politicians, in the past, were so intelligent as to realise this fact. They aimed their words at the instincts of the people leaving their minds wandering in the desert. We could do the same. We could charge people's nerves with big words, which are drawn from the world of imagination and which make them perform chaotic actions, for which they did not prepare or make any previous plan. We could leave them to cry their voices hoarse by cheering : "O God Almighty!" "Would that a calamity betake the English !", as our forefathers had done under the Mamelukes when they cried, "O Lord Almighty ! Send the Osmanly to perdition".

Nothing followed their cries. Was this then the mission for which we were destined, and what could we have achieved if we had really gone along that road ?

I have mentioned in part I. of this discourse that the success of the revolution depends on its comprehension of the real conditions facing it and its capacity for prompt action. To this I now add that it should be free from the effects of glittering words. It should proceed with what it deems its duty, regardless of the price it may pay out of its popularity or of the cheers and the applause it may receive. Otherwise we shall betray the trust we hold for the revolution and its duties.

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Many people come to me and exclaim, "You have angered everybody." To which explanation I always reply, "It is

not people's anger that influences the situation. The question should be : Was what aroused their anger for the good of the country or for the interest of whom ?" I realise we have upset big land-owners; but was it possible not to upset them and yet behold some of us owning thousands of acres, while others do not own the plot of land, wherein they are buried after their death ?

I realise we have aroused the wrath of old politicians; but was it possible not to do so and yet behold our country a victim to their passions, their corruption and their struggle for the spoils of office ?

I realise we have angered many government officials; but without this was it possible to spend more than half the budget on officials' salaries and yet allot, as we have done, forty million pounds for productive projects ? What would have happened if we had opened the coffers of the treasury of the state, as they had done, and distributed their contents among officials and let come what may there after. The year that ensued would have found the Government unable to pay the salaries of officials.

How easy it would have been to satisfy all those malcontents! but what is the price that our country would pay out of its hopes and its future for that satisfaction ?

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Such is the role that history has fixed for us. We cannot

escape from it however high is the price we pay. We never misunderstood this role, or the nature of the duties it imposed upon us. These are steps to redress the wrongs of the past and clear away the deposits. We have gone ahead with them and have suffered hardships for their sake.

As for the future, it is not for us only to speak. In order to safeguard political life we have resorted to several leaders of public opinion of various classes and creeds. We said to them, "Draw up a constitution which will safeguard the country's sacred heritage"; and hence the Commission of the Constitution.

In order to guarantee economic life in future we sought the most eminent professors in the country and said to them, "Plan prosperity for the country and ensure for every citizen his daily crust of bread"; and hence the Council of National Production.

These are our limits which we have not transgressed. To remove the rocks and the obstacles that block the way at whatever price is our duty. The way is open to whoever has ideas and experience to contribute to the future in all its aspects. It is a duty imperative upon us all. We must not be selfish and monopolise it. Our mission necessitates that we should unite them all for the sake of Egypt, Egypt the strong, Egypt the free.

PART III.

After an absence of three months — Time and place Fate plays no jokes — Three circles — A role in search of a hero — Palestine is not a foreign land — Face to face with poverty in Palestine — The most valued news of aviation — Ideas in the battlefield — The earth and the stars — A glance at Weizemann's memoires — The single struggle and its elements — Force expressed in figures — Our responsibilities in life — Wisdom — The reality in pilgrimage.

For the third time I return to the philosophy of the revolution. I revert to it after three months or more full of rapid events and successive developments. Three months passed during which I did more than once try to find time to record these impressions on the Philosophy of the Revolution. My efforts have gone with the winds of successive developments which blew them away and dispersed them in space.

But the wind that blew away my efforts to register these impressions hardly affected the impressions themselves. It is true these impressions were not recorded on paper but they continued to turn round and round in my mind and react with other impressions already there seeking other details, whether in my memory or in the events of the day, to add to themselves and thus make the picture correct and clear.

But what is that correct and clear picture I would like to draw this time ? And what relation has it to the attempts I had made to depict, in the first part of this discourse and then in the second part, these impressions on the Philosophy of the Revolution ?

In Part I, I discussed how the revolution first started within us as individuals, in ourselves as normal types of the youth of our generation. I spoke of the revolution and its place in the history of our people, and of July 23rd as a day in that revolution. In Part II, I dealt with the attempts we

made as we proceeded along the road to revolution and how our national history has determined that road, whether in our consideration of the past, a consideration full of morals, or in our aspiration of the future, an aspiration charged with hope.

On those previous occasions I spoke of "time" but the "place" also claims its right. Let me therefore speak of "place" on this occasion.

I do not aim at a complicated philo ophical discussion of "time and place" but there is no doubt that the world and not our country only is the result of the reaction of time and place. In depicting the circumstances of our country, I said we could not forget the element of "time". We cannot forget the element of "place" either.

In simple language, we cannot go back to the Tenth Century and wear its robes which strike us as being curious and ridiculous now-a-days. Neither can we lose our way in the ideas which appear in front of us utterly black without a single ray of light filtering through them. In the same way we cannot act as if our country is a part of Alaska in the Far North or as if we are on Wake Island which lies distant and deserted in the vastness of the Pacific. If time imposes upon us its evolution, place also imposes upon us its reality. Having discussed time on the two previous occasions I shall now discuss place.

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We should first of all agree upon one thing before we proceed further with this discourse and that is to define the boundaries of place as far as we are concerned. If I were told that our place is the capital we live in I beg to differ. If I were told that our place is limited by the political boundaries of our country I also do not agree. If our problem, as a whole, is confined within our capital or inside our polical boundaries, it will be easy. We would lock ourselves, close all the doors and live in an ivory tower away as much as possible from the world, its complications, its wars and crises. All these crash through the gates of our country and leave their effects upon us though we have nothing to do with them.

The era of isolation is now gone. Gone are also the days when barbed wires marked the frontiers separating and isolating countries, and every Country must look beyond its frontiers to find out where the currents that affected it spring, how it should live with others... etc. It has become imperative that every country should look around itself to find out its position and its environment and decide what it can do, what its vital sphere is and where the scene of its activity and what its positive role could be in this troubled world.

As I often sit in my study and think quickly of this subject I ask myself, "What is our positive role in this troubled world and where is the scene, in which we can play that role ?"

I survey our conditions and find out we are in a group of circles which should be the theatre of our activity and in which we try to move as much as we can.

Fate does not play jokes. Events are not produced haphazardly. Existence cannot come out of nothing.

We cannot look stupidly at a map of the world not realising our place therein and the role determined to us by that place. Neither can we ignore that there is an Arab circle surrounding us and that this circle is as much a part of us as we are a part of it, that our history has been mixed with it and that its interests are linked with ours. These are actual facts and not mere words.

Can we ignore that there is a continent of Africa in which fate has placed us and which is destined today to witness a terrible struggle on its future. This struggle will affect us whether we want or not ?

Can we ignore that there is a Moslem world with which we are tied by bonds which are not only forged by religious faith but also tightened by the facts of history. I said once that fate plays no jokes. It is not in vain that our country lies to the Southwest of Asia close to the Arab world, whose life is intermingled with ours. It is not in vain that our country lies in the North East of Africa, a position from which it gives upon the dark continent wherein rages today the most violent struggle between white colonisers and black natives for the possession of its inexhaustible resources. It is not in vain that Islamic civilization and Islamic heritage,

which the Mongols ravaged in their conquest of the old Islamic Capitals, retreated and sought refuge in Egypt where they found shelter and safety as a result of the counter-attack with which Egypt repelled the invasion of these Tartars at Ein Galout.

All these are fundamental facts, whose roots lie deeply in our life; whatever we do, we cannot forget them or run away from them.

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I see no reason why, as I sit alone in my study with my thoughts wandering away, I should recall, at this stage of my thinking, a well-known story by the Italian poet Luigi Pirandelli which he called, "Six Personalities in Search of Actors".

The annals of history are full of heroes who carved for themselves great and heroic roles and played them on momentous occasions on the stage. History is also charged with great heroic roles which do not find actors to play them on the stage. I do not know why I always imagine that in this region in which we live there is a role wandering aimlessly about seeking an actor to play it. I do not know why this role, tired of roaming about in this vast region which extends to every place around us, should at last settle down, weary and worn out, on our frontiers beckoning us to move, to dress up for it and to perform it since there is no body else

who can do so.

Here I hasten to point out that this role is not a leading role. It is one of interplay of reactions and experiments with all these factors aiming at exploding this terrific energy latent in every sphere around us and at the creation, in this region, of a tremendous power capable of lifting this region up and making it play its positive role in the construction of the future of humanity.

There is no doubt that the Arab circle is the most important and the most closely connected with us. Its history merges with ours. We have suffered the same hardships, lived the same crises and when we fell prostrate under the spikes of the horses of conquerors they lay with us.

Religion also fused this circle with us. The centres of religious enlightenment radiated from Mecca, from Koufa and later from Cairo.

These were also collected in an environment in which all these historic, spiritual and material factors are closely knitted. As far as I am concerned I remember that the first elements of Arab consciousness began to filter into my mind as a student in secondary schools, wherefrom I went out with my fellow schoolboys on strike on December 2nd of every year as a protest against the Balfour Declaration whereby England gave the Jews a national home usurped unjustly from its legal owners.

When I asked myself at that time why I left my school enthusiastically and why I was angry for this land which

I never saw I could not find an answer except the echoes of sentiment. Later a form of comprehension of this subject began when I was a cadet in the Miltary College studying the Palestine campaigns in particular and the history and conditions of this region in general which rendered it, throughout the last century, an easy prey ravaged by the claws of a pack of hungry beasts.

My comprehension began to be clearer as the foundation of its facts stood out when I began to study, as a student in the Staff College, the Palestine compa'gn and the problems of the Mediterranean in greater detail.

And when the Palestine crisis loomed on the horizon I was firmly convinced that the fighting in Palestine was not fighting on foreign territory. Nor was it inspired by sentiment. It was a duty imposed by self-defense.

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I remember one day, after the partition of Palestine was declared in September 1947, the Liberal Officers held a meeting, during which they decided to assist the resistance movement in Palestine. The next day I went to the house of Hadj Amin El Husseini, the Mufti of Palestine who lived in Zeitoun then. I said to him, "You need officers to direct battles, and to train volunteers. There are a great number of officers in the Egyptian Army who would like to volunteer. They are at your disposal any time you require."

Hadj Amin expressed admiration of the spirit but he thought he would ask permission of the Egyptian Government before he said anything. He said to me, "I shall give you my reply after I have received the permission of the Egyptian Government." I went back to him after a few days. The answer he received from the Egyptian Government was refusal.

But we did not remain silent. Later the artillery of Ahmed Abdel Aziz began to hammer the Jewish colonies south of Jerusalem. The artillery officer in charge was Kamal El Dine Hussein, a member of the constituent committee of the liberal officers, which has now become the Counseil of the Revolution.

I also recall another secret which was the most valued by the liberal officers. Hassan Ibrahim had left for Damascus, where he contacted some officers of Fawzy El Kawookgy. El Kawookgy was then the commander of the forces of Arab Liberation, and was preparing a decisive battle in the northern zone of Palestine. Hassan Ibrahim and Abdel Latif El Boghdadi planned an audacious plan for a decisive action in the battle, for which the Liberation forces were then preparing. The main lines of this plan were : That the Arab Liberation Forces had no planes to support them in the battle and tilt the balance of victory in their favour. Had they had a supporting force from the air, which would bombard the focus of the operation from above, it would have been a deciding factor. But where could the Liberation Forces get the planes to fulfil this dream ?

Hassan Ibrahim And Abdul Latif El Boghdadi did not hesitate to mention that the Egyptian Airforce should perform this consignment. But how ? Egypt was not yet in the Palestine War. Supervision over the Armed forces, including the Airforce was close and alert. Yet despair could not penetrate into the details of this plan. A wonderful movement began in the aerodrome of the Air-Force. Tremendous energy for the repair and the preparation of planes was noticeable. Remarkable efforts for training and exercise spread like wild fire among the pilots; and very few knew the secret. Those who did, understood that the planes and the pilots were getting ready, for the day when a secret signal would come from Syria. They would then fly full out to take part in the decisive battle for the Holy Land. They would then proceed to an aerodrome near Damascus, where they would land and wait the repercussions in Egypt and hear the echœs of this movement, they embarked upon; after that they would decide which course to take. The most favourable possibility was that every pilot who took part in the operation, would be court-martialled. Many had already planned their lives if circumstances stood between them and the return to the Mother Country for a number of years.

The feeling of the Executive Committee of the Liberal Officers, which was emphatically the feeling which every pilot who took part in this daring plan, entertained, was neither love of adventure nor a reaction of the sentiment.

It was a remarkable consciousness of our fate that Rafah was not the last boundary of our country, and that our sphere of security compels us to defend the frontiers of our brethren, with whom we were destined to live together in one region.

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The plan did not materialise then because we did not get the secret signal from Syria. Later, circumstances necessitated that all Arab armies should enter the Palestine War.

I do not want now to discuss the details of the Palestine War. This is a subject that needs several many-sided discussions. But one strange lesson of the Palestine War I care to mention : The Arab nations entered the Palestine War with the same degree of enthusiasm. They all shared the same feelings and had known quite well the limits of their security. They came out of the war with the same bitterness and frustration. Everyone of them was thus exposed, in its own country, to the same factors and was governed by the same forces, that caused their defeat; and made them bow their heads low with shame and humiliation.

I sat by myself serveral times in the trenches and dug-outs of Iraq-el-Manshia. I was then the staff-officer of the sixth company, which held this sector, defended it sometimes and used it for attack often.

I used to walk amidst the ruins all around me, which

were left after the bombardments of the enemy. There I travelled far in my imagination. My voyage took me to the sphere of the stars where, I would regard the whole area from my great height above The picture lay before me at that time quite clear. Here was the place, wherein we lay besieged. There were the posts of our company and those of other companies, that shared the same lines with us. Beyond were the enemy forces surrounding us. In other places there were other forces of ours besieged also and unable to move, and had space only to mano uvre on a small scale.

The political circumstances prevailing in the capital from whence we received our orders threw round them all a siege more effective and paralysed us more than anything the enemy could do to us, who lay in Falouga.

There were also the forces of our brothers-in-arms in the big Home-Land, in the common interest and the motive that sent us rushing to the land of Palestine. There were the armies of our brethren, which were also our armies all were besieged by the circumstances that surrounded them and their governments. They all seemed like pawns in a game of chess, powerless and without will, except in so far as the hands of players move them.

All our nations seemed, beyond our rear-lines, the victims of a tightly-woven conspiracy which deliberately concealed from their eyes the facts of events and misguided them beyond self-recognition.

From the height of the stars above I used to come down to earth often and feel that I really defended my home and my children. Neither my dreams, the capitals, the states, the peoples, nor history meant anything to me then. This was how I felt when, in my wanderings I came upon the children of refugees who were caught in the tentacles of the siege after their homes had been demolished and their property lost. I particularly remember a young girl of the same age as my daughter. I saw her rushing out, amidst danger and stray bullets and, bitten by the pangs of hunger and cold, looking for a crust of bread or a rag of cloth. I always said to myself, "This may happen to my daughter." I believe that what was happening in Palestine could happen, and may still happen to-day, in any part of this region. as long as it resigns itself to the factors and the forces which dominate now.

After the siege and the battles in Palestine I came home with the whole region in my mind one complete whole. The events that followed confirmed this belief in me. As I pursued the developments of the situation I found nothing but echœs responding one to the other. An event may happen in Cairo to-day; it is repeated in Damascus, Beirut, Amman or any other place tomorrow. This was naturally in conformity with the picture that experience has left within me : One region, the same factors and circumstances, even the same forces opposing them all. It was clear that imperialism was the most prominent of these forces; even

Israel itself was but one of the outcomes of Imperialism. If had not fallen under British mandate Zionism could not have found the necessary support to realise the idea of a national home in Palestine. That idea would have remained a foolish vision, practically hopeless.

As I put down these impressions, I have before me the memoirs of Hayem Weizemann, the President of the Republic of Israel and its real founder. These memoirs were published in his famous book called "Trial and Error". They contain certain passages worthy of consideration on account of the particular stamp they bear. I pause at the following : "It was essential" Weizemann wrote, "that a big power should assist us. There were two great powers in the world who could give us this assistance : Germany and Britain. As for Germany it preferred to keep away and avoid any intervention. Britain was sympathetic and patronising". Again I pause as I behold Weizemann saying, "It happened during the Sixth Zionist Conference which we held in Switzerland that Hertzel stood declaring that great Britain only, of all the states of the world, has recognised the Jews as a nation in an independent form and apart from others." "We, the Jews", he continued, are worthy of having a home and being a state. Hertzel then read a letter to that effect from Lord Latterson on behalf of the British Gover-nment. In this letter Lord Latterson offered us the territory of Uganda to be a National Home. The members of the Conference accepted the offer. After that we suppressed and

checkmated this proposal at its early stage and buried it without clamour. Britain again sought to satisfy us. After this proposal we formed a commission of a considerable number of Jewish savants, who proceeded to Cairo to study the territory of Sinai. There they met Lord Cromer, who sympathised with our aspiration to achieve a national home. Later, I met Lord Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary, who hastened to ask me, "Why didn't you accept Uganda as a National Home ?" I replied, that Zionism is a national and political movement is true but there is also the spiritual side which we cannot overlook. I am certain that if we ignore this spiritual aspect we shall not be able to realise our political and national vision. I also asked Balfour, "What would you do if somebody would suggest you take Paris instead of London ? Would you accept ?"

I also ponder over another passage in Weizemann "In the Autumn of 1921 I returned to London where I was called to supervise the drafting of the covenant of the British Mandate in Palestine. The rough draft should have been submitted to the League of Nations in order that it might adopt a resolution upon it. Afterwards the Conference of St. Remo approved the very idea of the Mandate.

Lord Curzon had then replaced Lord Balfour as foreign secretary and he was responsible for the drafting of the covenant. With us in London then was the Great Jurist Ibn Cohen, one of the ablest authors of Legal Formulae in the world. Eric Adam, Curzons' secretary also cooperated

with us. We had a difference with Curzon, a difference which was the first and last.

We had recorded in the draft of the covenant a clause pledging Britain to the Balfour Declaration. And demanding that its policy in Palestine should be on the basis of a National Home of the Jews. The text of the clause we wrote was as follows : "And the recognition of the historic rights of the Jews in Palestine". Curzon proposed that this clause should be toned down so as not to arouse the Arabs when they read it. He proposed it should read : "And the recognition of the connections of the Jews and their historic relations with Palestine."

I wish to continue quoting from Weizemann's "Trial and Error, but we know that these old incidents were the first germs of the dreadful repercussions that tore Palestine into shreds and destroyed its very existence.

I now revert to what I was discussing, namely, that imperialism is the great force that throws around the whole region a fatal siege a hundred times stricter and more cruel than the siege around us in Falouga or around our armies and our governments in their capitals, from whence we received our orders.

I thus began to believe after these facts became established within me, in one common struggle and repeat to myself, "As long as the region is one, and its conditions, its problems and its future, and even the enemy are the same however different are the masks that the enemy covers its face with,

why should we dissipate our efforts ? The experience of what followed July 23rd increased my faith in a united struggle and its necessity. The secret of the picture began to reveal itself and the darkness which shrowded its details began to disappear.

I confess I also began to visualise the great obstacles that blocked the way of a united struggle. But I also believe that these stumbling blocks should be removed because they are the work of the one and the same enemy. I commenced lately a series of political contacts with the object of unifying the struggle whatever is the means. I came out of these contacts with an important result, namely, that the primary obstacle in our path is "suspicion". The seeds of that suspicion were sown in us by the common enemy in order to stand between us and the united struggle.

I recollect that one day, I sat talking with an Arab politician and a colleague of his. As he replied to me he turned to his colleague to find out the effects of his answer before he tried to discover its result on me. I said to him, "Overcome all suspicion you have and pour out to me all the contents of your heart; look me in the face and regard me in the eye." I do not mean to lighten the obstacles that lie between us and the unification of the struggle. Some of them are intricate and have roots deep in the environment and the historical and geographical circumstances which involve them. But is it certain that with a certain amount of elasticity, derived from far-sightedness and not from

negligence, we may find the position we should all take without embarrassment or pertinacity in order to face the united struggle ?

I do not hesitate for one moment to mention that our united struggle would achieve for us and our peoples everything we wish and aspire to; I shall always go on saying that we are strong but the great catastrophe is that we do not know the extent of our strength.

We make a mistake in our definition of power. Power is not merely shouting aloud. Power is to act positively with all the components of power.

When I attempt to analyse the components of our power I cannot help but point out three principal forces of power which should be the first to be taken into account.

The first source is that we are a group of neigbouring peoples joined together with such spiritual and material bonds as can ever join any group of peoples. Our peoples have traits, components and civilisation, in whose atmosphere the three sacred and heavenly creeds have originated. This cannot be altogether ignored in any effort at reconstructing a stable world in which peace prevails.

As for the second source it is our territory itself and the position it has on the map of the world, that important strategic situation which can be rightly considered the meeting-place, the cross-road and the military corridor of the world.

The third source is petroleum which is the vital nerve of

civilisation, without which all its means cannot possibly exist whether huge works for production, modes of communication by land sea and air, weapons of war whether they are planes flying above the clouds or submarines submerged under layers of water. All these, without petroleum would become mere pieces of iron rusty, motionless and lifeless.

I wish I could linger a while and discuss petroleum. Its existence, as a material fact established by statistics and figures, is worth making it a model for a discussion of the importance of the sources of power in our countries.

I have read lately a treatise published by Chicago University on the state of petroleum. I wish every individual of our people could read it, ponder upon its meanings and give free-play to his mind to realise the great significance which lies behind figures and statistics. This treatise shows for example that to extract the petrol of Arab countries would not cost a great deal of money.

Petrol companies have spent sixty million dollars in Columbia since 1916 and have not found a drop of oil until 1936. These companies also spent 44 million dollars in Venezuela and did not find a drop of oil until after 15 years.

These companies again spent 30 million dollars in the Dutch East Indies and have not struck oil until very recently.

The final result which this treatise proved in this subject is as follows :

The capital necessary for extracting one barrel of petrol

in the Arab countries is ten cents; The centre of oil production has shifted from the U.S.A., where oil-wells have been exhausted, where the price of land is exorbitant, and where wages of workers are high, to the Arab territory, where the wells are untouched and in a virgin state, where expensive land can be had for nothing and where labour accepts subsistent wages.

It is a fact that half the world's reserve of petroleum is still underground in the Arab regions and the second half is distributed among the U.S.A., Russia, The Caribbean and other countries of the world.

It is also established that the average output of one well of oil per day is as follows :

11 Barrels in U.S.A.
230 Barrels in Venezuela
4000 Barrels in the Arab Region

I hope I have succeeded in explaining clearly the degree of importance of this element of power.

We can consider ourselves, therefore, powerful, though not in the loudness of our voices whether we cry, wail, or appeal for help, but powerful when we sit calm and count in figures our capacity for work, powerful in our thorough understanding of the strength of this bond which links us and which makes our territory one.

None of its component parts could be isolated from the other; none could be as independent as an island, unconnected with the other parts.

Such is the first circle in which we must revolve and attempt to move in as much as we possibly can. It is the Arab circle.

If we direct our attention after that to the second circle, the circle of the continent of Africa, I would say, without exaggeration, that we cannot, in any way, stand aside, even if we wish to, away from the sanguinary and dreadful struggle now raging in the heart of Africa between five million whites and two hundred million Africans.

We cannot do so for one principal and clear reason, namely that we are in Africa. The people of Africa will continue to look up to us, who guard the northern gate of the continent and who are its connecting link with the world outside. We cannot, under any condition, relinquish our responsibility in helping, in every way possible, in diffusing the light and civilisation into the farthest parts of that virgin jungle.

There is another important reason. The Nile is the artery of life of our country. It draws its supply of water from the heart of the continent.

There remains the Sudan, our beloved brother, whose boundaries extend deeply into Africa and which is a neighbour to all the sensitive spots in the centre of the continent.

It is a certain fact that Africa at present is the scene of an exciting ebullition. White man, who represents several European countries, is trying again to repartition the continent. We cannot stand aside in face of what is taking

place in Africa on the assumption that it does not concern or affect us.

I shall continue to dream of the day when I see in Cairo a great institute for exploring all parts of this continent, arousing in our minds an enlightening and real consciousness and contributing with others in the different centres of the world, towards the progress and prosperity of Africa.

The third circle now remains; the circle that goes beyond continents and oceans and to which I referred, as the circle of our brethren in faith who turn with us, whatever part of the world they are in, towards the same Kibla in Mecca, and whose pious lips whisper reverently the same prayers.

My faith in the positive efficacy which can be the outcome of further strengthening the Islamic bonds with all other Moslems became deeper when I went to the Saudi Kingdom with the Egyptian mission who went there to offer condolences on the occasion of the death of its late King.

As I stood in front of the Kaaba and felt my sentiments wandering with every part of the world where Islam had extended I found myself exclaiming, "Our idea of the pilgrimage should change. Going to the Kaaba should never be a passport to heaven, after a lengthy life. Neither should it be a simple effort to buy indulgences after an eventful life. The pilgrimage should be a great political power. The press of the world should resort to and follow its news;

not as a series of rituals and traditions which are done to amuse and entertain readers, but as a regular political congress wherein the leaders of Moslem states, their public men, their pioneers in every field of knowledge, their writers, their leading industrialists, merchants and youth to draw up in this universal Islamic Parliament the main lines of policy for their countries and their cooperation together until they meet again. They should meet reverently, strong, free from greed but active, submissive to the Lord, but powerful against their difficulties and their enemies, dreaming of a new life, firm believers that they have a place under the sun which they should occupy for life.

I recall I expressed some of these sentiments to His Majesty King Saoud. He said to me "This is the real wisdom of the pilgrimage". Verily I cannot visualise a higher wisdom.

When my mind travelled to the eighty million Moslems in Indonesia, the fif y in China and the several other million in Malaya, Siam and Burma and the hundred million in Pakistan, the hundred million or more in the Middle East and the forty in Russia as well as the other millions in the distant parts of the world, when I visualise these millions united in one faith I have a great consciousness of the tremendous potentialities that cooperation amongst them all can achieve: a cooperation that does not deprive them of their loyalty to their countries but which guarantees for them and their brethren a limitless power.

I now revert to the wandering role that seeks an actor to

perform it. Such is the role, such are its features and such is its stage.

We, and only we, are impelled by our environment and are capable of performing this role.

DAR AL-MAAREF, CAIRO