

An Invitation

The hearts of the Cabinet's supporters are light and delicate — the slightest thing sets them fluttering into the air, and the slightest thing reassures them and settles them back in their chests. They heard talk of the ministerial crisis and took flight with the wind, consumed by panic and alarm beyond all measure. Then they heard that the Prime Minister had chosen the premiership over the leadership of the parliamentary majority, and back they came to their chests, settling between the ribs. Since yesterday they have been beating in a calm and measured rhythm, now that the intoxication of joy and gaiety, the elation of satisfaction and delight, has lifted from them. The hearts of ministers are, in all likelihood, more steady and more weighty than the hearts of their supporters — they do not take flight at trifles, nor settle at illusions and dreams. It is therefore most likely that the hearts of the ministers have not yet quieted and settled as the hearts of their supporters have quieted and settled. For illusion is sufficient to satisfy the Cabinet's supporters, but falls far short of satisfying the ministers. The ministers know full well, in their private moments, that the crisis has neither been resolved nor relieved — the Prime Minister has merely opened it, and it is proceeding on its course, intensifying from day to day and growing more tangled from time to time, until it reaches that impasse which leaves no room for give and take, nor for invoking the doctors' opinions at one moment in support of resignation and at another in support of remaining.

Despite all of this, the hearts of the Cabinet's supporters have been calm and settled since yesterday, and they have turned back to an appeal that is worth pausing over for a moment — not because it deserves to be paused over, but because it is apt to provoke laughter and to distract people, if only briefly, from the terrors and anxieties of the crisis that preoccupy them. For the Ministry's newspaper today calls for action now that the crisis has passed, and the Ministry's newspaper acknowledges that Egyptian life is filled with evil and danger, and that it needs everyone's cooperation to reform it and to ward off the calamities that have struck and those that threaten to strike. And after all of this the Ministry's newspaper asks everyone to put forward to the Cabinet whatever remedies they see for these ills — assuring its readers, and perhaps in this assurance drawing on some inspiration, that the Cabinet will attend to these proposals with due care, give them the consideration they deserve, and not hesitate to accept those among them that prove beneficial. We therefore accept this invitation, respond to it, and come forward to the Cabinet with the proposal that we consider most beneficial and most useful for lifting from Egyptian life the evil from which it now suffers, and warding off the calamities and misfortunes to which Egyptian life will be exposed tomorrow.

We assure the Cabinet and its supporters that we are entirely sincere, entirely well-intentioned, entirely convinced of the truthfulness of what we say and the usefulness of the proposal we submit. We assure the Cabinet and its supporters that accepting this proposal is far easier than they imagine — and that if they accept it now, they will relieve themselves and relieve the people of heavy burdens that their weak shoulders will never be strong enough to bear; and that if they do not accept it now of their own free will, circumstances will compel them to accept it against their will.

This proposal is that the Prime Minister submit the resignation of the Cabinet to His Majesty the King. For the continuation of the Cabinet alone is — to our knowledge and to the knowledge of

all Egyptians, with the exception of the ministers and their supporters, who are few in number and who perhaps know no less about this than we do — the source of the calamities, both those that have already befallen Egypt and those that threaten to befall her. And there is no way to erase evil except by erasing the causes that brought it about and imposed it upon the country by force.

The Prime Minister knows full well, and his supporters know full well alongside him, that the present Cabinet has failed in everything: it has failed in the management of politics, it has failed in the management of the economy, and it has failed in the protection of security and order. It came to power to eradicate the Wafd, yet has only increased the Wafd's strength and support. And however much the Prime Minister and his supporters may tell the people that the Wafd has weakened and is on the verge of extinction, the Prime Minister and his supporters demonstrate in every moment that weakening the Wafd — let alone destroying and eradicating it — is something that cannot be achieved: forces are exhausted in its pursuit however plentiful, efforts are spent in its cause however intense, and governments fall in its path however numerous their supporters and however long their tenure. This is something the Prime Minister knows, and something known by those other than the Prime Minister — his adversaries and his friends alike — and they do not doubt it in the slightest.

It came to power to conclude a treaty between Egypt and England — yet it pushed the prospect of such a treaty as far away as it could, postponed it willingly or unwillingly, extended to the British over Egypt an authority they had not previously held, and realised for the British in Egypt ambitions they had not dreamed of realising. It came to manage the economy and the finances in a manner unmatched by previous cabinets — and so it succeeded in a manner unmatched by previous cabinets, spreading over the lives of the people the dominion of hunger, deprivation, and poverty in a manner rivalled only by the dominion of the British over political life. It came to erase disorder and protect order, to prevent the shedding of blood and the destruction of lives — and so it succeeded in bringing about a state of affairs in which crimes, and crimes of murder in particular, are counted by the dozens every week; and in which the Director of Public Security was rewarded with a pay rise despite all of this, and then transferred — whether willingly or under compulsion — to a position that severs all connection between him and matters of security.

For all of this the Cabinet succeeded, and by all of this the Cabinet corrupted the people's views on politics, the economy, and security. The Cabinet gave the people cause to doubt the ability of authority to manage politics, the economy, and security. The Cabinet filled the hearts of the people with doubt about the value of things, and with indifference toward what they had once held dear — and the Cabinet drove all the people of Egypt toward that wretched life in which they feel secure about nothing, trust in nothing, and can expect from it, should it continue, nothing but evil and iniquity.

If this is true — and there is no Egyptian who doubts that it is true — then the only proposal that Egyptians can submit to the Cabinet for the reform of the situation is that the Cabinet resign, and that Egypt be given back her own affairs to manage as she wishes, free and self-determining, bearing responsibility for what she does — not yielding to this in submission, nor bowing to it unwillingly and against her will under the force of iron and fire.

If the Ministry's newspaper is sincere in what it claims — that the Cabinet will give due consideration to any proposal submitted to it for the reform of the situation — then here we are, submitting this proposal, as sincere well-wishers toward the Cabinet and toward the nation, faithful servants of the Cabinet and of the country. We shall see whether it accepts it or rejects it — God forgive us — no, we are in fact certain that it will reject it, until circumstances compel it to accept it and drive it to do so inescapably, whether in a matter of days or in a matter of weeks.

Kawkab al-Sharq, 11 September 1933.