

Success

Kawkab al-Sharq, 19 June 1933

I know of no cabinet that has succeeded in provoking the people's anger and stirring resentment and indignation in its breast as our present cabinet has succeeded in doing. Wherever you look in any quarter of Egyptian life you will find the people taking one path and the cabinet taking another: the people to the right and the cabinet to the left, the people to the north and the cabinet to the west. The fundamental principle the cabinet has taken as the basis of its conduct and existence is simply to act in opposition to the people's deeds, inclinations, desires, and interests; as though the fundamental aim to which the cabinet has devoted all its efforts — the goal it strains to reach — is nothing other than to put the people in an impossible position and to unleash upon it wrath and fury.

The days we are witnessing present the clearest and most manifest evidence of this odious contradiction between the life of the people and the life of the cabinet, between the aspirations of the people and the aspirations of the cabinet. We need not dwell on the hunger of the people and the extravagance of the cabinet; we need not dwell on the people's passionate attachment to liberty and the cabinet's fondness for force and repression; we need not dwell on the people's ambition for independence and the cabinet's submission to the authority of the foreigner — for all this has been spoken of so much and for so long that there is no further need to repeat it or remind people of it, since it has become the very substance of their daily existence. What we shall speak of instead is the activity of the people in these days and the activity of the cabinet; for in the comparison between these two kinds of activity there is an instructive and edifying lesson. The people are in a state of rebellion and turmoil, on account of what their sons and daughters are suffering from the machinations of the missionaries, the missionaries' tampering with religion, and their tyranny over morals and honour. The people fume and complain; the people persist in fuming and are engulfed in complaint; the people give no rest and give no rest to the newspapers — as though they believe the matter has now passed to the newspapers, and that the newspapers are capable of expelling the missionaries from Egypt, closing

their institutes and their shelters, repelling their aggression against Muslim sons and daughters, and checking their tyranny over religion, morals, and honour.

The cabinet, by contrast, is intensely active — excessively so — barely knowing where to stop. Its activity has consumed the city of Cairo, the city of Alexandria, the city of Port Said, and the entire provinces of the Delta. If you ask what this activity is directed at, rest assured it is something other than the protection of religion, morals, and honour. If you ask who this activity is directed against, rest assured they are people other than the missionaries. For the cabinet is not active in protecting religion, morals, and honour — it is active in protecting itself; and it is not protecting itself from any evil it fears or any real danger it dreads, but from phantoms that alarm it in its waking hours and terrify it in its sleep. The cabinet is not directing its formidable forces against the missionaries; it is directing them against the people. Yes — against this very people that cries out to it for help, seeks its aid, and waits for it to protect them from the aggression of the foreigner. The cabinet is intensely active in Alexandria because the leader of the Wafd and his companion stayed there for several days and then departed this morning; and the cabinet fears the leader of the Wafd and his companion wherever they may be, wherever they may stay, whatever direction they may head, in whatever place they may alight. The cabinet is mobilising soldiers, deploying battalions, and shaking the earth to prevent people from making contact with the leader of the Wafd and his companion. As for the missionaries who are assaulting religion, morals, and honour in Alexandria — the cabinet is too occupied with other matters to bother with them. And why not? Is not self-defence, even against phantom and imagination, the foremost duty — before all else, after all else, above all else? Let the cabinet first exist, and let it protect its existence from danger; then let it think, after that, about the existence of the people and their protection!!!

The cabinet is intensely active in Port Said, its soldiers having filled the streets and blocked every path to the people — not because a foreign female missionary is scheming against religion, morals, and honour, defying the authority of the state, and obstructing the rulings of the

judiciary, but because Ustādh al-Nuqrāshī has gone to this city to receive a member of the Wafd arriving from Europe.

The cabinet is apprehensive about Ustādh al-Nuqrāshī and his companion; it fears that people might make contact with them or gather around them. And why not? Is it not its right to defend its existence first, and only then to think — if circumstances permit — about protecting religion, morals, and honour, and the authority of the state, and the rulings of the judiciary?

As for the Delta, the cabinet's activity there knows no bounds. It has swept down upon it with horse and foot, and has spread across it something resembling martial law: soldiers are occupying the cities in full military occupation, cutting off roads in and around them with the barricades, barriers, and fortifications they erect; they are besieging railway stations and surrounding private homes; and the armoured train is said to be stationed between one station and another, while administrative officials neither sleep at night nor rest during the day. Why? Not because the missionaries are scheming against religion, morals, and honour, but because the leader of the Wafd and his companion are to alight in Tanta and travel thence by motor car to visit the Mother of Egyptians — and perhaps they may visit some Wafdists along the way.

And so the cabinet's existence is in danger, and self-preservation is the foremost and most pressing of all obligations. Let efforts be expended, let soldiers be mustered, let battalions be deployed, let the earth tremble — and let the people be persuaded that the present cabinet is alive, strong, and greatly blessed with strength and life!

As for Cairo, its state has been astonishing for days. Since last Saturday it has been witnessing what it had forgotten for months: soldiers spreading through it, their comings and goings multiplying, the government's power manifesting in its most awesome and most intense form as the people have known it, prison doors being thrown open, and administrative officials being deprived of rest and the enjoyment of life's pleasures — as though we were back in the election days of two years ago! If you ask what all this is about, the answer is simple: that the

workers of Thornycroft are Egyptians; that the Thornycroft company wishes its motor cars to swagger through the streets; and that the cabinet is obliged to protect these motor cars. It is therefore necessary to expend all its efforts in the city of Cairo to enable this company to send its motor cars strutting through the streets; these workers must be confined to their homes; and whatever charitable assistance might reach them must be cut off — for the feeding of these workers is not without danger to these motor cars.

Thus does God will that the contradiction between the life of the people and the life of the cabinet manifest itself in its most hideous and repellent forms: a people crying out to the cabinet to protect its religion, morals, and honour from the aggression of the missionaries — only to have the cabinet declare war upon it, incite soldiers against it, and forbid it to communicate with those it loves. A group of the people go on strike, and the government does not protect them — but protects the company from them; and it goes to such excess in this protection that it conscripts soldiers, throws open prisons, cuts off relief, and leaves these strikers as prey to hunger.

Do you suppose it is possible for any cabinet to have succeeded in what this cabinet has succeeded in — in provoking the people's anger, placing it in an impossible position, and kindling resentments and grudges within it? It is truly laughably painful that the people should seek the cabinet's help only to find it helping their enemies against them. It is truly laughably painful that the people should take refuge with the cabinet only to have it lay upon them its hand of oppression and coercion. But what is there to wonder at in this? The interests of this Egyptian people were not entrusted to the protection of Mr. Caine Boyd — they were entrusted to a cabinet that wants, above all else, to survive. Once it has assured itself of survival and settled comfortably into the seats of power, it will think thereafter about what promises and hopes it can offer to distract this people. And events have proven that pleasing the foreigners prolongs the life of cabinets and entrenches their position in the land, while pleasing the people neither advances nor delays anything. And so, if this cabinet has not succeeded in pleasing the people and accommodating its aspirations and high ideals, it has succeeded in

something better: it has succeeded in pleasing the foreigners — and
pleasing the foreigners is quite enough as a means to long survival.