

Egypt

Egypt is a country created by God to be free and independent, noble and dignified. God granted her the right to liberty and sovereignty and bestowed upon her a richer share of glory and honor long before other nations even understood the meaning of such words, indeed before history itself had yet recorded the existence of many other lands.

Yet today Egypt has lost her freedom and independence, and her dignity and honor have been wounded. She now commemorates one of those dark days on which her liberty was lost and her greatness diminished. And her people today—as always before—understand the meaning of freedom and independence, appreciate the value of dignity and honor, and cling passionately to the dream of living free, sovereign, noble, and proud.

Egypt is a land whose voice once resounded in the life of nations and generations for countless centuries, long before many peoples had learned the meaning of nations and generations, indeed long before history itself had acknowledged their existence. Yet now Egypt possesses no voice in the affairs of nations or peoples, nor even in the conduct of her own affairs.

The voice governing her life belongs instead to foreigners who crossed the sea, imposed their power upon her by force, subjected her to their authority, and from that day onward decided her fate without consulting her, without asking whether their rule pleased or displeased the Egyptian people.

Ask any Egyptian about freedom and independence, and he will tell you that he longs for them with the insistence of the oppressed seeking his rightful due. Ask him about dignity and honor, and he will tell you that he clings to them with the intensity of life itself.

Yet despite this longing, Egypt does not enjoy the freedom she seeks nor attain the life she desires, because foreigners arrived from across the seas bearing iron and fire, forcing her into a condition utterly unlike the life of a free and sovereign people, utterly unlike the life of a noble and dignified nation.

Egyptians therefore live two lives. One is entirely misery, humiliation, and denial: the life of a people dominated by foreigners who rule them as they wish. The other is wholly goodness, pride, and glory: the life of a people who felt oppression and swore to reject it, who felt humiliation and swore to cast it off, who experienced degradation and resolved to free themselves from it regardless of the effort and sacrifice required.

Egypt is this land whose people live in a continuous and violent struggle between reality and hope, between daily existence and the highest ideal. Every sunrise reminds them of humiliation pressing upon them, yet also of the pride urging them to resist it.

Egypt learned how to endure without despair, how to remain steadfast without surrender, how to struggle endlessly without accepting humiliation or injustice. She chose for herself a supreme ideal and will never rest until she reaches it: complete freedom and perfect independence.

Toward this ideal she continues to advance despite obstacles scattered across her path, despite the forms of evil poured upon her, despite the traps and schemes prepared against her. None of these things have prevented Egypt from continuing forward with firm steps, determined resolve, and sincere purpose, preferring death itself to abandoning this road.

This is the Egypt that today remembers with sorrow—a sorrow that revives hope, renews energy, awakens indignation, recalls ancient glory, and draws the nation closer to its highest ideal—the ill-fated day more than half a century ago when the English army entered Cairo.

Egypt has never forgotten that day and never will forget it, even after the English army departs from Cairo. Today it remains a memory of humiliation imposed unjustly by foreigners, but one day it will become instead a memory of glory imposed upon history itself by Egyptians, because they believe in their rights and continue their struggle without ceasing or weakening until they attain them and compel the English to retreat from their country, acknowledging the rights they once denied.

Egyptians today understand their rights too deeply and cherish them too fiercely ever to abandon them or neglect the struggle required to achieve them. Egyptian youth today possess hearts too intelligent and consciences too refined to deceive themselves with slogans or comfort themselves with empty hopes.

Egyptian youth will never believe they are truly free while the English army remains upon Egyptian soil. They will never believe they are truly independent while English authority extends across Egypt. They will never believe they are truly noble and honored while Egypt's affairs—great and small alike—are governed contrary to Egypt's own will.

Egyptian youth today are too intelligent and too conscious of duty to accept anything less than what

youth in every genuinely free and independent nation demands. They are neither distracted nor careless, but vigilant and fully aware of what others seek from them and what they themselves desire.

They know perfectly how to resist the usurpers and colonizers, and how to offer their lives and efforts as a small and acceptable price for the realization of their hopes for dignity and independence.

Egyptian youth now know the history of Egypt and understand the hardships and calamities that have befallen their country. They know how to learn from this history: how to feel pride and dignity when reading the glorious pages that depict Egypt's greatness in ancient and medieval times, and how to cultivate patience, steadfastness, and resistance to oppression when reading the darker pages describing the injustices inflicted upon Egypt.

When they read Egypt's history in all its brightness and sorrow alike, they learn how to love Egypt in happiness and suffering alike, how to honor her when she is proud and independent, and how to sacrifice their lives for this country that once tasted the sweetest forms of glory and prosperity without being corrupted by arrogance, and later drank the bitterest cups of injustice and aggression without surrendering to weakness or submission.

Anyone who claims that Egyptian youth can be distracted from their national duty by any worldly temptation is either deceiving others or deceiving himself. Anyone who claims that Egyptian youth required a special anniversary to remind them of the English occupation of Cairo or the bombardment of Alexandria is equally deceived or deceptive.

For within every Egyptian heart two images contend eternally: one representing foreign aggression, the other representing national dignity. Every day in Egyptian life has been—and will remain—a sorrowful yet hopeful reminder of those black days when foreigners first set foot upon the beloved eternal homeland.

Do not ask an Egyptian—whether young or old, rich or poor—about the Egypt he loves and defends, the Egypt for which he would willingly sacrifice his life: is she Arab or Pharaonic? Egyptians concern themselves with such questions only in scholarly debate.

The Egypt that fills their hearts and drives them toward hope and action stands above all theories and all speculation, beyond the knowledge of scholars, the research of historians, and the philosophies of thinkers.

She is the eternal, enduring, beloved homeland whose earth nourishes us, whose sky shelters us, whose waters sustain us, and which grants us all the pleasures that make life lovable and all the pains that shape human character.

Egypt is this eternal and enduring homeland through which the centuries pass with all their catastrophes and transformations, yet she herself remains unchanged: fixed, abiding, and forever smiling. Each day her gentle sun rises to spread movement and life through all things and all people, while her calm and mighty Nile flows on, likewise giving life to everything and everyone.

This is the Egypt for which our ancestors lived, whatever their original races may have been. They preferred no country to her, withheld from her no effort, and denied her no sacrifice.

This is the Egypt for which we ourselves now live, whatever our own origins may be, just as our fathers lived for her and our sons will continue to live for her. We shall never prefer another land to her, never withhold any effort from her, and never refuse to give our lives for her.

And this is the Egypt we see today humiliated beneath foreign authority, yet hope tomorrow to see nobler, stronger, and more invulnerable than ever before—beyond the reach of every aggressor and every ambition.