

Terror

Kawkab al-Sharq, 13 January 1934

Yet this proves genuinely a fear of a special kind — the very one that so unsettles the cabinet's own heart, and drives the Minister of Interior beyond his own composure, restoring to the police an added measure of cruelty, and a further measure of violence, driving them toward the very worst state they had already reached, some time ago, in accosting people, assaulting them, striking their own bodies with clubs, and whips, forcing them into prisons outright, and even venturing to violate what ought never be violated: the very sanctity of the bond between the people, and the throne, the very relationship between the country's own people, and the country's own sovereign.

A genuinely strange terror, this one that has seized the cabinet's own nerves, ever since Thursday — she has already lost whatever self-restraint she once genuinely strove to affect, whatever preference for calm, whatever genuine economy in injustice, reverting, instead, to exactly what the previous cabinet once was — or, rather, the Minister of Interior has himself reverted, to exactly what he once was, working alongside Sidqi Pasha, receiving from him his own lessons in violence, and cruelty — reverting to that same sharpness of sensitivity, that same delicacy of feeling, that same genuine distress, whenever the Wafd's own leader goes out, that same genuine distress, whenever the Wafd's own leader returns home.

A genuinely strange terror, this one that has made the Minister of Interior sense that Egypt herself now holds something genuinely worth fearing, besides Sidqi Pasha, that Egypt herself now holds a people, war genuinely being waged against, besides those weak, hesitant supporters of Sidqi Pasha's own — that the truly skilful man is exactly the one who fights Sidqi Pasha, and his own men, through every hidden variety of warfare, until, having finally finished with him, and with them — his own men taken firmly from him, and he himself reduced to silence, isolation, and submission — he then openly wages war against the Wafd instead, through these same well-known instruments: the police's own instruments, their own clubs, and whips, their own force, and severity, deployed through the streets, dispatched along the roads, crammed around villages, spread throughout villages, transforming the countryside into a genuinely terrifying spectacle — were it not, rather, a genuinely

laughable one, provoking nothing but a mere shrug of the shoulders — the spectacle of a genuine battlefield, a genuine field of combat.

Yes — a genuinely strange terror, this one that has spread through the cabinet, ever since Thursday: waking her, for war, from her own slumber, restoring her to activity, from her own languor, compelling her to feign a life she genuinely does not possess, feign a strength she genuinely does not possess, feign a fierceness whose own genuine season has already passed, replaced, instead, by a season of calm, and reassurance, contenting herself, merely, with managing daily business, signing papers in government offices, listening to senators, and deputies, and answering senators, and deputies — until God grants her that same great rest, attained by truly great men, only across a genuine bridge of exhaustion, as Abu Tammam once put it, and attained, too, by merely good men, and the assistants of good men, without any genuine toil, or effort, without any genuine hardship, or exertion whatsoever.

Might the very source of this same strange terror lie, then, in the new High Commissioner's own arrival, in Egypt, and his own settling, in the capital, for several days now, outwardly engaged with social occasions, and every variety of courtesy, hunting, and visiting antiquities, while secretly harbouring research, study, reflection, and assessment, and already preparing, for himself, some hasty judgment, to carry back with him, once he crosses the sea, to his own country?! Might the very source of this same terror lie, rather, in the High Commissioner's own residence, in Cairo, and the cabinet's own eagerness, to demonstrate she possesses exactly the kind of strength that would impress him, exactly the kind of fierceness that would please him, that she remains genuinely capable of warring against the Wafd, exactly as Sidqi Pasha once warred against it, of squandering liberties, exactly as Sidqi Pasha once squandered them, of resisting the people's own activity, exactly as Sidqi Pasha once resisted it, and of demonstrating, to the colonizers, that she has no wish whatsoever — exactly as Sidqi Pasha once demonstrated, to the colonizers, that he had no wish whatsoever — for Egyptians to enjoy a free life, in which they might do exactly what free men do?!

Might the very source of this same terror lie, rather, in the cabinet's own genuinely well-intentioned, kind-hearted, naively conscientious nature — imagining the new High Commissioner knows nothing whatsoever, of her own affairs, or Egypt's own affairs, wishing, then, to demonstrate to him that she is everything, that no one else is anything at all, that she genuinely holds the very reins of power, genuinely dominates hearts, and

souls, and that the Wafd's own leader, and his own men, and those who honour them, and gather around them, amount to nothing but a genuinely small minority, deserving of no real consideration whatsoever?!

Might the very source of this same terror lie, rather, in the cabinet's own genuine alarm, upon receiving news that the High Commissioner had already witnessed a genuinely enormous crowd, of Cairo's own people, honouring the Wafd's own leader, this past Thursday evening — genuinely dreading this, and wishing to guard against anything similar, and so expending whatever strength she expended, Thursday evening, Friday morning, throughout Friday's own day, and even part of that same night, wishing to extinguish the people's own fire, with mere mouths — though the people's own fire is never extinguished by mere mouths, nor can any merely good man, and his own good colleagues, ever genuinely manage to extinguish it?!

All of this remains entirely possible — yet all of it, if it indicates anything at all, indicates only that the cabinet remains genuinely good-natured, and naive, genuinely well-intentioned, and innocent-hearted, genuinely excessive in her own good faith, toward the passing days, and toward the English, genuinely excessive, too, in her own self-doubt, and her own suspicion of her own capacity, to endure at all, without English approval as her own genuine support.

The police's own activity, in hunting people down, and arresting them, proved genuinely excessive, this past Thursday evening; the police's own activity, in hunting people down, and blocking the roads against them, proved genuinely excessive too, when the Wafd's own leader performed his own prayers, yesterday; and the police's own activity, in oppressing people, subjecting them to every variety of torment, and besieging villages, proved genuinely excessive, when the Wafd's own leader, and his own men, visited certain Wafdists, yesterday.

All of this proved genuinely excessive — genuinely more excessive than this same cabinet, weakened as she already is, and preoccupied as she already is with other affairs, could genuinely bear. And all of it proved, on top of everything else, entirely futile, achieving nothing whatsoever, of any genuine use. A man far stronger than her already once attempted to turn people away from the Wafd, and never succeeded, retreating, in the end, to his own home, thoroughly forsaken, thoroughly defeated. A man far more skilled, and clever, than her already once attempted to convince the English that people had already turned away

from the Wafd, seeking refuge with him instead, honouring him instead, trusting him instead — and never succeeded either: the English never believed him, the people never believed him, and he himself never even believed himself. The days themselves then insisted on revealing to him, and to the English, and to the people, that he had never genuinely secured anyone's love, anyone's trust, or anyone's faith — remaining, rather, entirely alone, propped up only by mere authority. And once authority itself abandoned him, he became entirely alone, propped up by nothing whatsoever, no one giving him any real heed — God forgive us for even saying it — indeed, no one even mentioning him at all.

Whatever the cabinet has done, ever since Thursday, has proved genuinely excessive, and entirely futile. Does the cabinet not agree with us that any man still possessing some remnant of understanding, some remaining measure of perceptiveness, ought genuinely to avoid such excess, and turn away from futility offering no genuine good whatsoever?

Yet worse than all of this together, more excessive than all of this together, more genuinely futile than all of this together, and more genuinely contemptuous of the law than all of this together, was exactly what the police did, yesterday, when they turned back someone genuinely making his own way toward His Majesty the King's own palace, and when they seized, from one of the people's own sons, petitions certain people had wished to submit to His Majesty the King himself. For His Majesty the King's own palace remains a genuine refuge, for all Egyptians alike — and the people's own right, to take refuge there, to complain to him, to turn to him in fear, seeking redress for injustice, and exposure of harm, remains a genuinely fixed, sacred right, one only a violator of the law himself would ever dare infringe.

What, then, does the cabinet make of the fact that she was never formed, to turn away those seeking refuge, at the palace, from the palace itself, nor to prevent those wishing to complain, to His Majesty the King, from actually complaining, to His Majesty the King? How does she explain this? How does she interpret it? How does she reconcile it, with the law itself?! Does she wish to turn, perhaps, to the Minister of Finance, to have him explain all of this to her, through some marvel of his own constitutional jurisprudence, claiming, to her, and to the people, exactly as he once claimed, to the deputies, that the cabinet herself is the King, and that whoever wishes to complain, to the King, ought simply to complain, to the cabinet instead? Should the people, then, wish to complain, to the King, about the cabinet herself, must they complain, to

the cabinet, about herself?! Should the people, then, wish to petition the King, to dismiss the cabinet, must they petition the cabinet, to dismiss herself?! Or does the cabinet perhaps believe herself too exalted, to ever be complained against, too precious, to ever have her own dismissal requested?!

Does the cabinet genuinely believe she performs her own genuine duty, toward the palace, and toward the people, when she turns the people away, from ever seeking refuge, at the palace, and turning to it, in fear? Let the cabinet believe us, genuinely: these same actions she persists in bring her no genuine benefit whatsoever, secure her nothing at all — they benefit her own rivals, rather, securing them the very greatest advantage imaginable. Were she to swear to the English, a thousand oaths upon a thousand oaths, every single day, that the people stood with her, the English would never believe her; were she to expend every last ounce of strength on this earth, to keep Egypt's own sons from ever turning, in fear, to Egypt's own King, she would achieve nothing whatsoever by it. All that genuinely remains within her own power, and her own capacity, is to manage daily affairs, sign papers, in government offices, listen to the words of senators, and deputies, and answer the words of senators, and deputies — until God grants her that same great rest, He mercifully grants the sick man, once he has finally despaired of ever being cured.