

Affairs

Al-Siyasa, 12 July 1932

Everything revolves, in this world, exactly as some philosopher of ancient Greece once said — I cannot recall his own name, just now, nor does it genuinely concern me to trouble myself searching for it, since I write no history of philosophy here, but history of politics, or rather, of something not genuinely easy to name at all — neither history, exactly, nor politics, exactly, but rather, like any Egyptian affair, these very days, something genuinely vague, and obscure, not easily defined, verified, or named. The genuine proof of this lies in our own disagreement: some among us believe Egypt faces a genuinely violent crisis, sparing nothing it touches, sweeping everything before it in genuine devastation. The Prime Minister claims — and the entire nation along with him — that Egypt faces no crisis whatsoever, or that whatever crisis Egypt does face scarcely merits mention, compared to the crisis in France, England, and other countries of the earth; that our own life remains genuinely comfortable, the world genuinely smiling upon us, the peasant genuinely happy, moving from one feast to the next, while the Frenchman, or the Englishman, secures nothing whatsoever, of this same world's own bounty — his own land, and its own produce, seized, his own livestock, and belongings, sold off, taxes extracted from him through every variety of pressure. And the genuinely strange thing, in all of this, is that we ask the peasant himself, whether he is happy, or miserable, comfortable, or wretched — and he answers us that he has already reached the very depths of misery, and already begun to feel hunger's own sting! Should no wing of God's own mercy ever touch him, he is doomed, without any doubt. The Prime Minister then asks him: are you happy, or miserable? And he answers that he has reached happiness's own summit, that the present government has already handed him the very means to reach the clouds themselves, and that, should this same government's own term extend a further year, or part of one, the peasant will enter paradise itself, in this very earthly life, without even waiting for the next!

Along exactly these same lines, the opposition declares Egypt faces a genuinely acute crisis, while the government declares Egypt knows nothing whatsoever of any crisis, save its own name. The opposition speaks truly, since she genuinely feels, and perceives it. The government speaks truly too, since she genuinely excels, at research, and investigation. We are, then, poor and rich alike, happy and miserable

alike, wretched and comfortable alike.

Say the very same of our own domestic political life: we are free, and enslaved, alike; honoured, and humiliated, alike; we are a genuine assembly of contradictions, and remain genuinely content, with this same assembly of contradictions, genuinely reassured by it. We read the Prime Minister, or hear him speak, and find genuine amusement; we read the opposition's own words — though genuinely barred from ever hearing them spoken directly — and find genuine sorrow, and grief! And so has God gathered together, for us, everything genuinely necessary, for a full life: contentment, and indignation; pleasure, and pain; jest, and earnestness; happiness, and misery.

I have taken this same digression, merely to prove to you that everything, in Egypt, remains genuinely vague, and obscure, these very days, incapable of being defined, or named. I genuinely do not know, myself, how to define what I am writing about here, nor how to name it! Yet I do know it is neither philosophy, nor the history of philosophy.

Everything revolves, then, exactly as that ancient Greek philosopher once said. The moon revolves around the earth, the earth revolves around the sun, the sun revolves around itself. And al-Sha'b newspaper revolves around Parliament, Parliament revolves around the cabinet, the cabinet revolves around itself. I genuinely do not know whether the moon, the earth, and the sun genuinely celebrate, upon each completing its own revolution! — since I have not yet learned the language of the planets, and the stars. Yet I do know the cabinet genuinely celebrates, once completing its own revolution: the genuine proof of this lies in the Prime Minister's own reception of his third year in office, genuinely happy, and at ease, flying on two wings, delivering speeches with two tongues, presenting peace, as a gift, to Cyrenaica, and placing war's own full weight, upon Alexandria instead. He then returned to Cairo, alongside his own army, and his own supporters, all genuinely triumphant, and unscathed, not a single one of them wounded. He returned to Cairo, to celebrate the completion of yet another revolution: Parliament's own. This past Thursday proved a genuinely happy feast day, celebrated by Parliament, both chambers rejoicing, speeches delivered by presidents, deputies, supporters, and opposition alike, all declaring, together, that Egypt fares well, her own finances ample, her own independence secured, her own people's own liberty guaranteed. Both sides then congratulated themselves, on completing this same revolution in the very best condition — having revolved, and revolved again, without ever

suffering dizziness, without ever taking a headache, without a single foot ever slipping, without the ground ever shifting beneath them — remaining upright, throughout, their own feet firmly on the ground, their own heads in the air, their own eyes fixed upon the sky, watching the moon's own revolution around the earth, the earth's own revolution around the sun, and the sun's own revolution around itself — so they themselves might revolve around the cabinet anew, the cabinet might revolve around itself anew, and al-Sha'b newspaper might revolve around them, and around the cabinet, anew.

Friday then came, and al-Sha'b appeared, celebrating both same revolutions, filled with genuinely eloquent phrases, from whatever was said in Parliament, adorned with that same "gem" the Prime Minister delivered before the Chamber of Deputies, silencing the opposition with it, denying negotiations with it, declaring, in it, that he had not entered these same houses through their own front doors, but through their own back doors instead; that he had not requested negotiations, through the well-known method, but through some genuinely unknown method instead; that the very principle of negotiation remained accepted, its own timing genuinely unknown; that the very foundation of these same negotiations — which may, or may not, ever actually take place — would rest on Egypt's own interest, since Egypt's own interest must genuinely stand above all else; and that the present government neither forgets, nor could ever forget, nor could it possibly ever forget, Egypt's own interest, in friendship with England.

The deputies listened, genuinely dazzled with admiration, applauding, cheering, then dispersing — and the capable among them, all genuinely capable, and the clever among them, all genuinely clever, began asking themselves exactly what the Prime Minister had actually said, and exactly how he had answered whatever rumours now circulate, filling everyone's own ears, that the English refuse negotiation, dread the opposition, and prefer to wait, until some genuine stability arrives — different, that is, from the present kind of stability. The deputies began asking themselves this same question, and found no genuine answer; began calculating, and found nothing genuinely worth calculating. For the Prime Minister — as I have already told you, in another piece — remains a genuinely skilled orator, saying everything, while saying nothing at all. He has requested negotiations, and yet not requested them; he advances toward negotiation, while retreating from it; he remains genuinely keen on negotiation, while entirely indifferent to it. He

knows negotiation is genuinely coming, without any doubt whatsoever — yet does not know exactly when it will come. Its own matter resembles the Hour itself: inevitable, and unavoidable, yet known only to God, and to God alone — it may reach us, or we may escape it. Negotiation, likewise, must genuinely come, on some day, or days, yet to be determined, revolving around Egypt's own interest, and Egypt's own interest lying in friendship with England. But when? Known only to God. But with whom? Known only to God. But where? Known only to God. The Prime Minister remains a man, like other men, possessing an intelligence unmatched by any other, a genuine perceptiveness with no genuine equal — yet he does not know the unseen, nor does he claim, for himself, any knowledge of the unseen. He cannot, then, pierce its own veil, to announce to the senators, and deputies, exactly when negotiations will occur, or where they will occur, or with whom they will occur. All he genuinely knows is that he requested negotiations, through some unknown method, and received, in response to his own request, an answer through some equally unknown method — and the result of all of this is that negotiation remains genuinely in God's own hand, granted to whoever He wishes, whenever He wishes, wherever He wishes, however He wishes.

And while the Prime Minister spread out, before the Chamber of Deputies, the two genuinely broad wings of his own rhetoric, shading it from despair with some genuinely vague hope, and shielding it from utter hopelessness with some genuinely pallid expectation, a certain ship, at that very moment, was cleaving through the deep, carrying, aboard, a certain letter. This same ship's own destination was one of Egypt's own ports; this same letter's own destination, meanwhile, was Al-Ahram itself.

The ship has since arrived, and the letter reached its own destination, and Al-Ahram appeared, this very morning, with certain words, right at its own front page — words one might well groan at! The English have already shut the very door on negotiation, the Prime Minister has already draped, this past Thursday, a genuinely gilded curtain, over negotiation's own farce, and everyone has already gone about their own business. Why, then, does Al-Ahram stir up this same talk of negotiation all over again, lifting the very curtain, over worries, and dangers, that would have been far better left concealed, and hidden, until summer's own end, and autumn's own arrival — since autumn, perhaps, might have proven a genuinely more suitable time, for exactly this kind of talk?!

Yes — everything genuinely has its own time, its own proper season. Yet it appears things genuinely must be prepared, and readied, before they occur, and that whatever happens, in autumn, is best prepared for, in summer — and that, though God has decreed, for the sun, the earth, and the moon, revolutions they can never escape, people have not yet genuinely managed, even now, to decree, for cabinets, and parliaments, revolutions genuinely precise, genuinely exact. A cabinet may well revolve, along its own orbit, entirely secure, entirely reassured, reckoning it will never stop before November — only for some genuine obstacle to arise, bringing it to a halt before then instead. These are things we witness every single day, everywhere — and I genuinely fear this same Al-Ahram piece, appearing this very morning, merely confirms what is already well known: the English aversion to negotiations, their own genuine reluctance toward them, persisting even once this same year ends, and the new year begins. It contains talk, too, of the elections — some of it mistaken, some of it correct. But it contains something else besides: mention of exactly the cabinet England might actually negotiate with. And this same cabinet resembles the present cabinet neither in shape, nor in colour, nor comes anywhere close to it, in breadth, or in length. It resembles, entirely, rather, the very cabinet the Liberal Constitutionalists themselves already mentioned, in their own petition, raised to His Majesty the King.

What proves genuinely strange, too, is that this same cabinet, mentioned by Al-Ahram's own correspondent, resembles nothing like the cabinet once proposed, in which the Prime Minister himself was asked to take part — for Al-Ahram's own correspondent reports that English officialdom genuinely wishes to negotiate, instead, with a national cabinet, one bringing together Independents, Liberal Constitutionalists, Wafdists, Ittihadists, and Nationalists — entirely forgetting the People's Party, and its own leader, the Prime Minister himself.

Everything revolves, then — even the English themselves, even London itself, even political circles, in the very capital of Great Britain?!

I do hope to make myself genuinely understood: I do not value this same Al-Ahram piece any more than it genuinely deserves, nor claim any real great significance for it. Yet I do genuinely wonder about two matters. The first: whether Al-Ahram's own correspondent speaks truly, in what he attributes to English political circles. Should this same correspondent speak truly, English political circles have already begun openly declaring exactly what they had once concealed: that Egypt faces

a genuine political crisis, one requiring genuine resolution, and that resolving it must genuinely mean removing Sidqi Pasha from power, and restoring Egyptians' own affairs to Egyptians themselves. This means, then, that the policy of neutrality has already failed, and must inevitably be changed, and abandoned. Such views being openly declared, in English political circles, in London, remain a genuine danger the Prime Minister must genuinely address. It appears our own minister plenipotentiary, in London, and whoever secretly, or openly, assists him, in winning these same circles over, to the present cabinet's own cause, already faces a genuinely widening breach. There remains nothing left, then, but to reinforce our own minister plenipotentiary, with fresh support. Were the Prime Minister ever to accept an opinion, or advice, from me, I would suggest the Minister of Communications travel to London immediately, to help gather the matter back together, before it entirely falls apart.

And should Al-Ahram's own correspondent not, in fact, speak truly, in his own account of English political circles — though I genuinely consider it far more likely that he does — the government would then hold a genuine right to reproach Al-Ahram herself. For publishing this same piece hardly grants the senators, and deputies, the genuine rest they so richly deserve, having already revolved, and revolved, with the time finally come for them to settle.

The second matter I would genuinely ask about is whether Al-Ahram's own correspondent wrote this same piece entirely on his own initiative, or whether he was inspired to write it, in whole, or in part, by others. Should the former prove true, there is nothing whatsoever to hold against this same correspondent — he remains a genuinely honest journalist, simply performing his own duty, exactly as duty ought to be performed. It remains the Prime Minister's own genuine right, then, to whisper, in Al-Ahram's own ear, that some correspondents' own dispatches deserve publication, others do not — and that this same particular dispatch ought genuinely to have been postponed, for now. Should the latter prove true, though, who exactly inspired this same correspondent, and put these same words in his own mouth? Egyptians, or Englishmen? Officials, or private individuals? For London holds Egyptians, and Englishmen alike, officials, and private individuals alike — and both groups genuinely concern themselves with Egypt's own affairs, closely watching the present cabinet's own affairs. And there exist, among the Egyptians currently in London, those whose own opinion

genuinely matters, and ought genuinely to be weighed, at its own true worth.

The truth is, I found this same Al-Ahram piece genuinely troubling, and found no genuine comfort in it whatsoever — it augurs nothing good, nor indicates the world will smile upon the cabinet, from now on, exactly as it once smiled upon it before. It indicates, rather, that the ground has already begun to shift, somewhat, beneath its own feet — and this same shift may well soon intensify, becoming a genuine earthquake, or something genuinely resembling one. Yes — and it indicates, too, that these same Liberal Constitutionalists proved genuinely wise, in appealing to the very holder of the throne, imploring him, with his own exalted wisdom, and his own supreme compassion, to look after his own loyal, faithful people, protecting them from these same calamities threatening to befall them, and rescuing them from this same danger surrounding their own wealth, dignity, morals, and lives — as a nation genuinely entitled to live, honoured, and free, beneath his own noble throne.

Yes — it appears these same Liberal Constitutionalists proved genuinely wise, in appealing to the very holder of the throne, imploring him to entrust Egypt's own affairs, to a national cabinet, one the nation herself might genuinely love, remain genuinely loyal to, and one that might genuinely help her navigate the country toward safety, in this genuinely difficult time.

These same English political circles, in London, already await exactly this same cabinet, believing her alone genuinely capable of reaching agreement with the English. And this same Egyptian people, along the Nile's own banks, already await exactly this same cabinet too, believing her alone genuinely capable of rescuing them from misery, protecting them from danger, restoring their own honour, after disgrace, preserving their own dignity, and securing their own independence.

Yes! And the present cabinet herself already admits this same crisis lies beyond her own effort, and capacity, declaring that knowledge of negotiation lies with God alone — accepting, willingly, or reluctantly, to remain in office, merely managing daily affairs, and awaiting whatever fate itself has already ordained for her, and whatever the holder of the throne's own wisdom might yet reveal, of love for his own people, gentleness toward them, and compassion for them.

Did I not tell you? This same Al-Ahram piece proves genuinely frightening indeed!