

From Afar ... Messengers of Hatred

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Al-Jumhuriya, 3 September 1960.

I am not the author of this title; I am merely borrowing it from a well-known French writer who made it the title of an article of his in the newspaper *Le Figaro*. And this article portrays, most splendidly and most skillfully, the souls of the conservative partisans of colonialism — their minds, their consciences, and their hearts as well — for they have not swallowed, and will never to the end of time swallow, this phenomenon that distinguishes the age in which we live: the phenomenon of aspiring to freedom and striving earnestly to attain it and reach it in the end. And this phenomenon is, by the reckoning of these conservative partisans of colonialism, a catastrophe; for they believe, in the depths of their souls, in two grave things: one of them money, and the other authority, with whatever reach of voice and loftiness of word and elevation of standing it brings. For every wealthy man among these conservatives has invested all or part of his money in some colony or other among the colonies his homeland controls, so that if this colony is liberated, or demands its freedom and grows insistent in that demand, it injures this wealthy man first in his money, and then in his homeland's authority and standing. And every poor man among these conservatives is enriched — in place of money — by his homeland's authority, by its elevated standing among nations, and by the reach of its voice across the regions of the earth; or say, it consoles him for the lack of money, and stirs in him a great deal of pride, and tempts him with vanity, and makes him imagine that he shares, at close hand, in this far-reaching authority, in this distant voice, and in this lofty standing.

For every colony that frees itself, or demands freedom and insists upon that demand, chastens him in his pride, humbles his vanity, and casts into his heart the thought that his homeland has begun to weaken a little or a great deal, and that he has his own share of this weakness, and that he is bound, tomorrow or the day after, to see his homeland fallen from its lofty standing to a lesser one, and that he himself shares very closely in this decline. And he is, for that reason, like his wealthy fellow, filled with hatred for the liberation of colonies, hatred for their demand for freedom, resentful of his homeland whenever it lacks the power to crush this rebellious colony and return it to abasement and humiliation,

and to compel it to believe that it was created for abasement and abasement created for it, that it was created for obedience and obedience created for it, that it was fashioned by nature for enslavement, and that it was decreed for it to toil and labor and taste every kind of wretchedness and misery, so that the wealthy man might grow still wealthier, and the arrogant, haughty man might increase his share of pride, arrogance, and vanity. And nothing is easier for the souls of these colonizers than to invert the realities of things and turn them into their opposites: it is not the exploiter who degrades and presses people into serving his own interests who wrongs these people and drives them, through his own injustice, to hate him and to rise up against him when the opportunity for revolt comes to them — rather it is the people whose subjugation and exploitation have gone on so long, and who then became conscious of their own existence and felt their right to a dignified life, and demanded that right, who are the wrongdoer, the aggressor, the transgressor; because he diminishes the wealth of the rich and the pride of the masters and humbles their lofty standing, and because he tempts the peoples who shared with him in abasement and enslavement to rise up as he rose up, and to demand their right to freedom and dignity as he demanded it.

He is, then, a spreader of injustice and hatred, and for that reason a corrupter upon the earth, and whoever endorses his demand for freedom, or assists him in some of his affairs after he has won this freedom, shares with him in this injustice and is a corrupter of the earth just as he is.

And it is for all of this that that well-known French writer composed his article, and it is for all of this that the newspaper *Le Figaro* published this article of his for him; for this writer is, in all likelihood, among those who shared in the exploitation of the colonies, and among those who shared in the exploitation of the Suez Canal when the Suez Canal was subject to the authority of that wretched company, and he is, for that reason, resentful whenever a colony is liberated, and resentful whenever his homeland recognizes the independence of this colony, whether this independence be forthright or compromised; and for this reason he calls the advocates of freedom in the colonies, and in the countries that were subjected in some measure to foreign authority, "messengers of hatred."

So the former Prime Minister of the government of the Belgian Congo is a messenger of hatred, because he demands his homeland's freedom, its unity, and its right to dignity; and the President of the United Arab Republic is among the messengers of hatred, because he removed the British from Egypt and liberated the Suez Canal and restored it to its

rightful owners; and those who rose up against the King of Iraq and Nuri al-Sa'id are among the messengers of hatred, because they wanted Iraq to be ruled by itself.

And everyone who assists these men in what they have demanded, or demand, for the advancement of their countries and the betterment of their peoples' lot shares with them in this mission of hatred, and aids them in spreading corruption upon the earth. The Soviet Union, for instance, shares in spreading this hatred and manifesting this corruption on land and sea, because it endorses and supports liberated peoples; and the United States of America is a spreader of hatred, an abettor of corruption on the earth, because it recognizes the independence of liberated peoples and does not wage economic war upon them.

Now, had such an article come from a man among those who practice politics as a profession and live by it and for it, the matter would have been of little consequence; for politicians have their own doctrines, and their own lives, with whatever good and evil these contain. But for this article to come from a literary writer who takes no part in practical politics, but merely observes life and assesses it and judges it with the mind of the thinking man of letters, not the mind of the professional politician — this is what calls, I do not say for astonishment (for everything is possible in this modern life), but for reflection. For had this writer, and those like him, not had some share in the benefits that the colonies yield, he would not have thought this way of his, nor would he have turned the realities of things into their opposites, nor would his conscience have rested easy with the notion that it is right for millions to suffer abasement, misery, hunger, and every kind of hardship, so that a handful of people, scarcely to be counted beyond the hundreds, might live in comfort; nor would his conscience have consented that mankind, in this modern age, should be divided into two groups: one enjoying everything it loves of the good things of life, material and moral, needing only to wish for a thing to have it granted; and the other deprived of all the good things of life, material and moral, having no right even to wish, nor to think of wishing — indeed, having of the realities of humanity nothing but its outward form, with no meaningful difference between it and the tools with which it works; it is itself nothing but a tool like them, subjugated like them to that handful to whom it has been granted to enjoy everything, on condition that there be, upon the earth, many millions deprived of everything.

It is self-interest alone that corrupts the consciences of writers and thinkers, and brings them to this degree of distortion in viewing things and judging them.

Praise be to God that there are, in the West, other writers whose consciences greed for money has not corrupted, nor the hankering after wealth, nor the desire for the luxury that corrupts souls and deadens hearts.

Writers who look at things as they are, who do not alter their realities nor invert their natures nor favor themselves with the good to the exclusion of other people, but rather rejoice at every call to freedom, delight at every attainment of freedom, and are made happy when they see the light of truth spreading across the earth little by little, on the verge of filling it entirely, of achieving equality among peoples, and achieving this equality among the sons of these peoples, and spreading justice, so that there shall be, upon the earth, no master and no mastered, but the whole earth free, lived in and worked by free peoples. This ideal may be somewhat distant, but it, like other lofty ideals, draws a little nearer, and mankind rises toward it little by little, until, when mankind attains it, there appear to it other, loftier ideals, further to reach and higher in standing, more worthy for mankind to seek and to strive earnestly to seek, until it attains them and aspires to ideals yet loftier still.

For the life of mankind is a continuous aspiration, a continuous ascent, hopes fulfilled only that other hopes may appear in their place, driving mankind on to effort, toil, and work. And the one thing beyond doubt is that these messengers of hatred of whom the French writer speaks will one day be recorded by history as having been messengers of love and peace, messengers of freedom and human dignity, messengers of a justice that does not allow the rich to live in luxury at the cost of the misery of the wretched and the degraded.

All the signs of modern life show that the destiny of the weakened peoples lies toward freedom, dignity, pride, and equality, however much it may gall the colonizers, the ignorant among them and the cultivated alike.