REVOLT ON THE NI LE

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with a foreword by

PRESIDENT NASSER

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Colonel Anwar EL Sadat's book is neither an autobiography nor a history of the Egyptian Revolution, but a series of episodes and vivid portraits which have a direct bearing on the Egypt of today.

These pages show how the old political passions and the evil influences to which Egyptian leaders were exposed hampered the rational progress of our country.

The patriots were fully aware of the danger of their clandestine activity, which forms the lively central theme of this book. Historians will find valuable information here.

Colonel Anwar EL Sadat is liked and respected. His military virtues, courage and coolness, loyalty and devotion, force of character and disinterestedness, and finally his love of justice,

destined him to play a leading role in the Egyptian Revolution of July 23rd, 1952.

He has displayed these qualities throughout his lively career, and he put them at the service of our national cause. He was imprisoned for his patriotic activities in November, 1947", by order of the British. He was imprisoned again in 1947. One may imagine how a man of his combative nature suffered under these restraints. Nevertheless, these years of captivity gave him leisure to meditate at length upon the condition to which the Egyptian people had been brought by two thousand years of slavery. He escaped to liberty, a living symbol of the immense desire for liberation which inspired the peoples of the Valley of the Nile.

He fought ceaselessly for his ideal. The masses were now seeking social justice, and the "Free Offers," among them Colonel Sadat made every effort to inspire and maintain that faith which was to

enable the people to assail their triple enemy: imperialism, the monarchy and feudalism.

The country was stagnating under autocracy. That yoke had to be thrown off to open the way to our renaissance. A long history of negligence, error and frustrated projects showed that a reform of the State was utterly necessary and that the monarchy was powerless to accomplish it. Jobbery and corruption sullied the regime. That center of infection had to be eradicated.

More than once, the Revolution almost foundered in stormy seas. The struggle lasted for ten bitter years.

Egyptian affairs over the last twenty years are made difficult to understand by the complexity of events. But closer scrutiny reveals certain leading themes: the Army's discontent at the decay of the State, the falling into discredit of traditional authority, and the Egyptian people's

resentment of the occupation of their country by the British.

It is not always easy to overcome the forces of dissolution, treachery, inertia and indifference, but the patriots laid the foundations upon which a new edifice was to arise: the Republic of Egypt. Order was imposed on chaos.

Today, in their new-found freedom, the Egyptian people have found self-respect. The old social hierarchies have given way to civil and political equality, which encourages public-spirited and creative enterprise. The slogan of the new Egypt is: Work, produce. The Revolution is dedicated to the tasks of peaceful reconstruction.

This story ends in 1952, the year of the Liberation; and the beginning of a new era in Egypt. Already, our hope and faith in a regenerated Egypt are wiping out from our memory the humiliation and sufferings of an earlier time.

A new chapter of history opens for Egypt, and the future is full of promise.

GAMAL ABDUL NASSER.

Revolt on the Nile

Chapter One

IN THE YEAR 1938, chance, or perhaps it was the providential scheme of things, brought together in the garrison of Mankabad, in the province of Said, a group of young officers who had recently graduated from the Military Academy at Abbasieh. we spent all day on maneuvers, returning dog-tired in the evening to our tents. We sat around a campfire at the foot of Mount EL Cherif and talked into the night.

We were young men full of hope. We w ere brothersin-arms, united in friendship and in a common detestation of the existing order of things. Egypt was a sick country. The social and political unrest in Egypt was the theme of our debates.

Our days were sad, but the nights made up for it. One of our company was a manly and

straight-backed young; officer, nearly six feet tall, who was reserved and serious in manner. If we started a lighthearted conversation, it was invariably Gamal Abdul Nasser who interrupted to bring us back to graver topics. He had lost his mother early in life, and he bore the marks of that grief.

Gamal's convictions were deep-rooted. He was a true son of Said. He was passionately attached to the land of his origin, and his conversation was sown with proverbs and sayings from his native province.

Said, the old Thebaid of the Ancient Egyptians, is a beautiful and noble province. The great forces of nature hold sway there—the Nile and the earth which it waters. The men of Said are strong. It is a country of old legends and high deeds. It is a cradle of good workers, soldiers and stalwart men faithful to the ways of their ancestors. On a rocky eminence

in the heart of this province, Mankabad perches like an eagle's nest in a narrow plain enclosed by granite hills.

What did Gamal Abdul Nasser say to us as we sat around the campfire on Mount EL Cherif? His message to us was this: "We must fight imperialism, monarchy and feudalism, because we are opposed to injustice, oppression and slavery. Every patriot wants to establish a strong and free democracy. This aim will be achieved, by force of arms if need be. The.task is urgent because the country has fallen into chaos. Freedom is our natural right. The way lies before us—revolution."

So, at the beginning of 1939, the officers of Manka bad founded a secret revolutionary society dedicated to the task of liberation. In 1942, the society was organized in sections. each composed of separate cells.

The supreme command was invested in a Central Committee with a dozen members. All the revolutionary forces were controlled by this committee. The Committee made the plans. It was a secret assembly in the fullest sense of the word. It was the embryo of the Council of the Revolution which assumed power after the *coup d'etat* of July 23rd, 1952

The aim of the Committee was to establish by force a democratic and republican government. which implied the expulsion of the British from Egyptian soil and the destruction of the feudalism oligarchy which ruled our country. From the beginning, our movement attracted many adherents in the Army and in civil life, and it grew rapidly in influence and numbers

Sections were formed in every branch of the Army. Each member had the right to recruit new

members and was responsible for their conduct. Thus, each of us formed a new revolutionary cell around him. Soon there was a militant organization covering the entire country. Members used secret signs and passwords. Military rank was observed inside the Society as it was in the Army.

It need scarcely be stated that our organization was illegal. We worked in darkness, awaiting the dawn. It was a long-term plan, and Gamal Abdul Nasser was to be the architect and the strategist. His energy, his clear thinking, his balanced judgment equipped him, more than anyone else, for this task. Gamal's wisdom preserved us from premature action and from many dangerous adventures. Revolutionary tactics demand patience and lucid thought. We proceeded cautiously. It was useless and dangerous to make ambitious claims if we had not the means to translate them into reality.

We swore on oath to remain faithful to our country and to work with all our strength for its regeneration. The Army had a right to intervene, since both the government and the opposition parties were incapable of ending oppression.

The political parties squabbled for power, but whatever the results of the elections, the mass of the Egyptian people felt that they were being ruled by a hidden hand. The British continually interfered in Egyptian affairs.

Colonialism and feudalism—these were the twin instruments of our servitude. The social structure of Egypt on the eve of the Second World War can be compared to that of France before the Revolution of 1789. At the top, king Farouk and his family (the dynasty of Mohammed Aly) disposed of roughly one quarter of the national income. This Albanian royal house, shallowly rooted in national sentiment, had usurped its powers in the nineteenth century. The

dynasty wore itself out by its excesses. Privilege, prodigal expenditure, the promised reforms that were never carried out—these things sapped the foundations of the regime and undermined the prestige of the monarchy.

Separated from the people and shaken by public scandals, the monarchy through itself into disrepute by collaborating with the British, who preferred a tame tyrant to a strong democracy. In a word, the royal house of Mohammed Aly achieved a total failure. It aimed to detach *Egypt from* the Ottoman Empire, and it threw the country into the arms of the Britlsh Empire. It set out to rescue Egypt from the anarchy of the mamelukes, and it ended in anarchy itself. It claimed to serve the country: it was only of disservice. Eventually it became completely immobilized and did nothing at all. That is why, the day after the Revolution, the

monarchy was abandoned by everybody and was swept away in the flood tide of popular resentment.

The Egyptian Parliament was theoretically elected by universal suffrage. In fact it represented neither the country nor the people, and the constitutional regime had given way to government by oligarchy. The ruling class of Egypt were the great landowners, who owned most of the wealth of the country. These feudal lords, comparable to the Prussian junkers were in undisputed control of their villages. At election time, they put pressure on their serfs to maintain themselves in power.

They behaved in a manner which was already out of date in Europe in the nineteenth century. Land-owning was a speculative business. The land was let and sublet at exorbitant rates, and the absentee landlords spent the winter in their sumptuous mansions in Cairo and Alexandria.

During the summer they gambled in the casinos of Europe.

These vast feudal fortunes were achieved by exploitation of the *fellahin,* who lived in a perpetual bondage of debts, poverty, ignorance and disease. In 1939, two million Egyptian tenant farmers were so poor they did not even own the simple tools which they needed to till their fields. The peasant proletariat of Egypt was an amorphous, passive, dumb mass of people whose chief preoccupation was survival.

The Egyptian people had to storm two bastilles to achieve their revolution. Feudalism was one. British imperialism was the other. But once one fortress was breached, the other was sure to crumble.

In 1939, the sky clouded over, the storm burst. The Second world War scattered our revolutionary group to the tour winds. Gamal Abdul Nasser was sent to the Sudan, a country artificially separated

from Egypt by a line drawn across the map by the British.

Sudan, at this time, was a land of exile for Army officers in disfavor. In fact, in an area bigger than Europe, almost anywhere outside Cairo and Alexandria was a place of exile for people who had ceased to discharge their function as "satisfactory" servants of the State. Lieutenant Nasser, already suspected by the authorities, did not wait to be transferred. He volunteered and was posted to the 3rd Infantry Battalion at Khartoum.

there he met a man named Abdul Hakim Amer, and the two young officers found they shared a common detestation of the existing order, and a common vision of the future. Their temperaments were very different. Lieutenant Nasser was calm and deep, always master of his emotions. Small setbacks did not disturb him, but they upset Abdul Hakim, who was impulsive and unpredictable. The

two men frequently quarreled because of their temperamental differences, but during three years' service in the Sudan they got to understand and respect one another. Today they are the firmest friends. Abdul Hakim Amer, the impulsive young lieutenant of Khartoum days, is now Minister of War and Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian Army.

CHAPTER TWO

THE WORLD saw Egypt at this time as an underdeveloped country With poorly exploited natural resources, no heavy industry and no modern army. Only by virtue of her geographical position was she involved in the war. If our interest had not been subordinate to British strategy, Egypt would have remained neutral.

For the revolutionary cause, the war meant delay. Our group had been broken up. My friends, split up among different units of the Army and posted all over Egypt, had disappeared from the scene.

The British dominated the country. They held Egypt in a net of political and military obligations from which she could not free herself. In theory, Egypt's sovereignty had been restored by the treaty of August 26th, 1936. In fact the country remained in

bondage. Mixed up in a foreign conflict in which we had no interest Egypt .became nothing more than satellite of the British Empire.

Egyptian opinion was sharply conscious of our dependent status. We saw the world in desperate and cruel conflict, and our fate was in the hands of a foreign power. The effect was suddenly to wake Egypt from her torpor. The nationalist temper of public opinion grew stronger.

why should Egypt be made a battlefield? The people resented it. But at the same time, they saw that Egypt herself was an important stake in the tremendous struggle between the world powers. When the decisive moment arrived, might not Egypt herself play a key role? This knowledge gave Egypt a strong desire for a place in the world which would eventually emerge from the torment of war.

For Egypt, the war acted as a signal, setting in motion the forces of transformation which had been

latent for some time. She awoke from the lethargy in which servitude had plunged her, with one of those sudden surges of energy which she has many times experienced in her history.

England was caught off guard. She tried to fight against the patriotic mood of the Egyptian people, but inside of destroying it, she merely repressed it. It brake out again in other forms. The British embarked on systematic provocation in order to uncover revolutionary elements. These actions resulted in a state of tension in the relations between the two countries and provoked a number of incidents, which, as we shall see, almost changed the course of events.

As the war situation changed, so did the internal situation in Egypt. Egypt's wartime relations with Great Britain went through three stages—partial collaboration, almost complete collaboration, then

total collaboration—corresponding to the successive Egyptian governments between 1939 and 1945

At the outbreak of hostilities, Egyptian policy had been defined by Prime Minister Aly Maher: Keep Egypt out of the war. This declaration of Egypt's intentions seemed clear enough, but in fact it was equivocal, because the idea of neutrality was precluded by Egypt's military obligations under the 1936 Treaty. How could Egypt remain neutral, when British troops occupied the whole country and controlled the bases, communications, shipping routes, ports and natural resources of the country?

The day Italy entered the war, Mussolini declared that his government entertained no aggressive intentions towards Egypt or the Arab world, whose friendship he held to be a fundamental axiom of his foreign policy. Aly Maher was nevertheless forced to apply the 1936 Treaty and break off relations with

Italy. But he did so with doubts in his mind—doubts which grew as the tide of war turned against Britain. Egypt did not believe in an Allied victory.

Despite British pressure, Aly Maher refused to declare war on the Axis. His firm and uncooperative attitude caused impatience in London. In this situation the Egyptian Army found itself in a dilemma. The government's policy was to keep the country out of war, but that did not mean we must not take part in hostilities. We fought, but who were we fighting for? Surely we were intended to fight for Egypt, and for Egypt alone?

Britain took quite a different attitude, as is proved by the order which Mr. Neville Chamberlain dispatched to Sir Miles Lampson (later Lord Killearn), the British Ambassador in Cairo.

"Aly Maher must be dismissed . . ."

And Aly either fell. He was peremptorily invited to take himself off to his country house and meditate upon the ill fortune which befalls all those who oppose the will of Britain.

Aly Maher went, but he remained on our side. He was an enlightened man, receptive to modern ideas. It was into his hands, twelve years later, that Farouk delivered his instrument of abdication.

The deposition of Aly Maher showed where we stood with the Allies. We were certainly not our own masters, and we reacted to this knowledge with anger and indignation. Memories of the First World War came back— the empty promises of the British, our fathers conscripted for forced labor on the battlefields of Africa, Asia and Europe—these sacrifices had been in vain.

The flame which flared up in the revolution of 193 9 had been quenched by unworthy leaders. On the day they assumed power, they had forgotten their duty to Egypt and served their masters, the British.

Then came the revolution of 1935, inspired by students, in which Gamal Abdul Nasser, then an adolescent, played a leading role. The result of that rebellion was a fusion of the parties into a national front. The same idealism was at work in both insurrections, but these heroic efforts had been in vain.

We had failed in the past. Our servitude and our misery still persisted. Did the future reserve a better fate for us? The war, from which we could hope for nothing, seemed as if it might drag on forever. The dawn of the Golden Age seemed far away.

'With Italy's entry into the war, hostilities spread to North Africa, where the opposing armies exhausted themselves fighting back and forth

across the desert. Egypt looked on and bided her time.

By September, 1940 Britain's fortunes were at zero. France had been knocked out. Britain hoped that the French armies in Africa and Syria, at least, would refuse to accept the French armistice of June, 1940. But after a brief hesitation General Nogues in North Africa and General Mittelhauser in Syria proclaimed their loyalty to Marshal Petain.

Great Britain stood alone. Her position in Egypt was as desperate as it was at home. Her weakness in the Middle East was apparent to everyone, and the position of her Army, Navy and Air Force in the Mediterranean had become untenable.

(Encouraged by the isolation of the British in the Middle East, Mussolini launched an offensive from Libya. Under the command of Marshal Graziani, the Italian Army marched across the desert of Cyrenaica and attacked the British Army under General Wavell. (It was a short, victorious campaign. On September 14th, the Italians occupied

Sollum. On the 17th, they took Sidi Barrani, sixty miles inside Egyptian territory~ Graziani placed his infantry about 25 miles east of Sidi Barrani. Then he hesitated. The British, worn out, had nothing with which to oppose him. But Graziani waited, and he gave the British time to get their second wind, regroup and bring up reinforcements.

If Graziani had attacked from his position east of Sidi Barrani, he could have led the Fascist Army to victory and occupied Egypt. It would have been all the easier for him, since relations between the British and Egyptians had seriously deteriorated at this time

This deterioration arose in November, 1940, when Churchill succeeded Chamberlain as Prime Minister of Great Britain. The change had immediate repercussions in Egypt, for Churchill decided that Egypt must be completely subordinated to the

British war machine, using whatever degree of intimidation proved necessary.

As he writes in his memoirs, Churchill began by neutralizing the Egyptian Army. Through the British military authorities in the Middle East, he ordered the Egyptian High Command to disarm and immediately to withdraw all Egyptian forces from Mersa Matruh in the Western Desert.

The zone of Mersa Matruh was divided into three sectors, one held by the British and two held by two Egyptian divisions. The Egyptian Army was notified of the British demand on November 20th, and we were ordered not only to evacuate our positions, but to hand over our arms to the British This caused a great deal of unrest among us. Was it a trap designed to make the revolutionary elements betray themselves, or did the British fear we would attack them unawares at a crucial moment in the war?

At all events, the two Egyptian divisions were with drawn from Mersa Matruh, and our humiliation was complete.

We could not take this new provocation lying down. I pressed the view that, now or never, the time had come to act. The Army should rise up in general revolt with the support of the civilian population.

Our plan was as follows. Our forces would return to base, but on the way they would occupy strategic points, lines of communication and public utilities. We should then put the government of Aly Maher back in power there was perhaps one chance in a hundred of the rebellion succeeding, but it seemed to me that we should take that chance. Our revolutionary spirit must not be allowed to die, even if it meant fighting without hope. If we were defeated, then our gesture would serve as an

example to those who followed us The young people of Egypt would see our sacrifice as a demonstration to the world that our nation was as ready as any other to take arms against a great power rather than to abjure our faith.

But it was not to be.

We marched on Cairo. A cold appraisal of the facts showed that the revolt had the smallest chance of succeeding, and that defeat would seriously compromise our long-term plans. Sick at heart, we abandoned the idea of revolt. Nevertheless, we refused to hand over our arms to the British. We simply marched back to base.

I told myself that better days would come. We had to hang on, see it out. For the moment, we were defeated, but, soon, Egypt's day would dawn.

Chapter three

IN CAIRO I was again united with my friends from Mankabad. It was clear that rebellion at this time would be premature. We did not believe in miracles. Also, the philosophy of our movement rejected the idea of historical determinism. Progress was not automatic. It was the result of individual efforts, struggle and sacrifice.

In Egypt, personalities have always been more important than political programs. We in our movement resisted the cult of the "leader" and the idolatry of great names, but in the prevailing circumstances we were obliged to approach the leaders of a number of different groups who might serve our purpose.

In every revolution there are two phases. First, men lead the revolution: then the revolution leads the men. we were still at the first stage, where the human factor is of great importance. The solution of our problem lay as much in our relations with our friends as in the struggle against our enemies.

Accordingly, I was ordered by the Revolutionary Committee to get in touch with two of the dominating figures on the Egyptian political scene: Sheikh Hassan El Banna, the Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, and General Aziz El Masri, Chief of Staff of the Army. I knew neither of them. I was at this time a Lieutenant, twenty-four years of age.

My chance came on the eve of the Feast of Mouled EL Nabi, the birthday of the Prophet, which is a day of great celebration in Egypt. It is a holiday for the children, who are given presents of sugar dolls in colored paper clothes and miniature horsemen in bright costumes. For adults, the traditional present is a girdlecake flavored with chickpeas and sesame. The rich, in their sumptuous mansions, pass the night in feasting and carefree pleasure.

But not for me! That night marked the beginning of a series of adventures of which the echo was to reach the Egyptian people, sometimes as a murmur, sometimes with the explosive force of a bombshell.

I was serving in Army Communications at the time, at Meadi. We were sitting, eating and talking,

in a room in the barracks. Most of the men in Communica tions were technicians who had volunteered for the Army. They were shrewd and intelligent men, and I liked talking to them. After work, we ceased to be officers and men and became simply comrades.

On the evening of the Feast of Mouled EL Nabi, a certain officer entered the room accompanied by a strange figure, muffled up in a red *abaya* (cloak) which almost completely hid his face. I had never seen the man before. I shook his hand and invited him to dine with us. He politely accepted and sat down. He had sad and dreamy eyes, like a saint, and, despite his bizarre clothes, his bearing and conversation were noble.

He talked chiefly on religious topics, but notin the accustomed manner of the preacher, with sonorous phrases and learned references. He went straight to the nub of the question, and he spoke with directness and ease. It seemed strange to me, but here was a theologian with a sense of reality, a man of religion who recognized the existence of facts. This was my first meeting with Sheikh Hassan EL Banna, Supreme Guide Df the Muslim Brotherhood.

The Muslim Brotherhood was founded by Hassan EL Banna in Ismailia in 1930. Its ostensible aim was the moral perfection of the individual, but its underlying aim was the reorganization of society on an ideal plane.

originally the Brotherhood had no political objective, t simply expressed the wave of moral regeneration which was transforming Egypt. The austere virtues of the Supreme Guide contrasted

with the abasement of the people in high authority in the State~ His influence on the masses grew. The youth of the country flocked to join this dynamic new organization .

The Muslim Brotherhood rose to a position of power with extraordinary rapidity. It appealed to the egalitarian mood of the time, absorbing intellectuals and workers, rich and poor. Soon the organization became conscious of itself as a political force and began giving arms and military training to its members. This was a mortal error. M he Brotherhood opened its doors to good and bad indiscriminately, and the germ of its future aberratiops was sown. The Brotherhood was to become an organization of unbounded fanaticism, and a menace to public order.

But, such as it was in its early days, the Muslim Brotherhood seemed a useful ally to our revolutionary movement. We hoped to use our association with the Brotherhood as a lever to achieve our own ends. How we were deceived in our calculations will emerge later.

The man in the red cloak invited me to visit him at the headquarters of the Brotherhood. I hastened there on the appointed day. The place was an old, tree shaded mansion in an outlying suburb of Cairo. I felt strangely frightened as soon as I walked inside. The place seemed shrouded in mystery. I entered an enormous room. The walls, in the usual style of these old buildings, were lined with white marble. Beyond this room was a sort of long corridor, which turned out to be not a corridor, but a library. The walls were literally covered with books. There was a smell of old paper. In the dim light, I

became aware of two eyes, watching me. The Supreme Guide was sitting waiting at the end of the room.

We had a long conversation that day. Hassan EL Banna deplored the decline of religion and morals in Egypt and the common disregard of the precepts of Islam. I le said that the revival of Egypt must be based upon the Faith, and that the dogmas of Islam must be inculcated in all branches of the Army.

We met again frequently, and our conversations broadened to include political matter$. He had a surprising, intuitive grasp of the problems facing Egypt. At once fanatical and clear-thinking, he realized that he was living at the end of an epoch.

Hassan EL Banna controlled the policy of the Brotherhood, and he ruled it like an autocrat. Even those close to him knew little of his plans, and I felt certain that this man was thinking out grandiose projects which he kept strictly to himself.

He had begun organizing Para-military organizations and shock battalions. He set up ammunition dumps and arms depots. For this kind of work he relied on the younger members of the Brotherhood, one of them being the officer who had brought him to me at the barracks at Meadi.

I was with Hassan EL Banna one day when a soldier entered unexpectedly, carrying two sealed boxes which he placed in front of the Supreme Guide. The soldier started when he recognized me. Hassan EL Banna reassured him with a gesture,

and the young soldier, smiling, opened the boxes. They contained revolvers.

I felt great joy at this moment. I foresaw the time when we, the men of the Army, would give the signal for the battle to begin, and I knew that the great power of the people would sustain us.

But when would that day dawn?

Hassan EL Banna knew that I was engaged in some secret activity, and I learned later that he knew much more about our organization than I imagined possible at the time. He did not try to recruit me to the Brotherhood, because he realized that our group kept systematically apart from other groups and parties, that we felt did not share the

same aspirations as ourselves. Neither did Hassan EL Banna try to sound me for information about our organization.

Our collaboration continued, cautiously and in secret. I functioned as liaison man between the Revolutionary Committee and the Supreme Guide.

One day I went to meet him in a very discouraged mood. The Military Governor had just announced the dismissal of General El Masri, our second possible ally, from his post as chief of Staff of the Army.

We knew that the British were behind this move, and the Committee urged me to get in touch with the General as soon as possible. Since he \vas a friend of the General's, I asked Hassan EL Banna to arrange an interview for me. We had to act With the

greatest caution, moving by night, in case we attracted the attention of the British Intelligence Service or their helpers, the Egyptian Secret Police.

I warned Hassan EL Banna that if I were discovered I should not be the only one to suffer the consequences. He inclined his head, smiling. Then he wrote a few words on a piece of paper and handed it to me, saying: "You will find him at this address."

I got lost in the maze of streets around the Place de Sayeda Zeinab before I found the house I was looking for. The brass plate outside said: *Clinic. Dr. Ibrahim Hassan. I* started to walk quickly up the stairs,, and then remembered that I should he playing the part of a patient, in case the building was being watched. I climbed the rest of the stairs

with a heavy tread, pausing frequently as though to recover my breath. I rang the door bell. When I entered I recognized the doctor as the vice-president of the Muslim Brotherhood. He at once ushered me into his office, where General Aziz EL Masri was awaiting my arrival.

The General was a small, slight man with a light complexion and grey eyes. Despite his advanced age, he had tremendous energy and fire. He combined the qualities of a soldier with those of a diplomat, controlling a passionate temperament with a will of iron.

He had achieved brilliant success during the Balkan Wars of 1912-1914 , and again in Libya where he fought with the Turkish Army against the Italians. He was receptive to modern ideas, having

traveled in France, England and Germany. His experience, his patriotism and his past record were such as to arouse the suspicion of the British and to make his services eminently valuable to the revolutionary movement.

It was the British Ambassador, Sir Miles Lampson, who had demanded the dismissal of Aziz EL Masri, on the pretext that the General was a pro-German Anglophobe. In fact, the British feared the presence of this imposing personality in the Egyptian Army, since he represented the spirit of independence and was known to support the liberation of Egypt, by force of arms if necessary. As long as he occupied the post of Chief of Staff, Aziz EL Masri was a dangerous man from the British point of view.

In 1938 I was one of the young officers present in the amphitheatre of the Military College when the General gave a lecture on defcuse tactics and motoriz.ed forces. He advocated a new method of destroying tanks, using one soldier and a special type of bomb. The British did not take his idea seriously, yet it was proved correct less than a year later, when the Second World War showed that a single soldier, armed with a "Molotov cocktail," could knock out the most up-to-date tank.

Aziz El Masri, with some other officers, also began a project to manufacture armored cars in Egypt. It was a success, and the British were much disturbed.

Next, the General adopted the German system of reconnaissance in the Egyptian Army. Then he finally and completely alienated the British by asking Egyptian Army commanders to send him detailed reports on the activities of the British if

military Mission, in order to decide whether it was necessary to maintain this Mission or whether its services might be dispensed with.

The General did nothing to endear himself when he told the chief of the British Military mission: "I have regretfully come to the conclusion that you are a trade and commerce mission, not a military mission at all." This occurred after the mission had placed an order for Bren guns in Britain, although the Czechs were offering them at much lower prices.

The British had infiltratcd Aziz El Masri's staff with a number of young officers with high military diplomas the highest qualification of all being, of course, a diploma for espionage on behalf of the British Secret Service! After his enforced resignation, the General was put on the retired list. The British kept him under constant surveillance.

The Egyptian regime was sinking further and further into decadence under a King who was selfish, uneducated to his royal task, and surrounded by men of tarnished reputation.

The General knew this unworthy sovereign well, for he had been his tutor in England in 1936. He told me of his vain attempts to give Farouk, then heir to the throne, the type of solid education which would fit him for the royal task which would one day be his. It was a waste of time. Farouk had already fallen under the evil influence of two intriguers, Omar Fathi and Ahmed Hassanein, who, in order to enjoy the favors of the future King, flattered his every caprice, taking him into London's night clubs and places of ill repute and bringing him home dead drunk in the small hours of the morning.

The two accomplices were determined to remove their master from every salutary influence. They succeeded in persuading Farouk that the General

had been imposed on him by King Fuad and that he intended to poison Queen Nazli, in order that the King should enjoy his son's entire affection. Farouk was horrified, for as much as he was indifferent to his father, he cherished a deep affection for his mother. The General was instantly dismissed from his post.

Now the old patriot, though full of sadness, affirmed his faith in the regeneration of Egypt. His hopes lay in the young officers of the Army, who would, he believed, become the educators of the people. He instanced the example of Napoleon, who carried out a *coup d'etat* at the age of thirty, reconstituted France and went on to govern an empire.

The aim of the Army must be the liberation and the reconstruction of Egypt on a sound basis.

Exhorting US to set to work immediately, Aziz EL Masri said

"Have faith! Act!"

Have faith! I felt the words deeply, for I was convinced that only faith could bring the Egyptian people out of the abyss.

For England, 1941 was a tragic year. For Egypt, it was a year of hope. the British Empire was confronted with the most dangerous situation in its history. In the Eastern Mediterranean, the revolt of Rashid Aly convulsed Iraq; in the West, the Axis was on the march; and between the two Egypt was stirring, ready to enter the fight. For Churchill it was really a desperate hour.

The situation was so menacing that the British Admiralty was faced with the prospect of abandoning the Eastern Mediterranean and concentrating the fleet at Gibraltar. The stepping-up

of the Axis air offensive and the attacks on the convoys between Malta and Alexandria showed that a big move was under way. The Axis had superior forces. The Fascist war machine was now in the experienced hands of the Germans. Defeat stared Britain in the face. Egypt owed it to herself to profit from these favorable circumstances. The morale of our forces was very high, and they were ready to fight.

We made contact with the German Headquarters in Libya and we acted in complete harmony with them. For the intervention of Egypt could not take the form of an unsupported internal uprising. We were not ready to act alone, and a regular war against the British was out of the question, for, weakened though she was, England had built up her armaments on an impressive scale. But if a junction could be effected between Egyptian insurgents and Axis troops, our war would become

an international affair. We followed events from day to day, pushing ahead with our preparations and making the best use of the modest resources at our disposal.

For us in Egypt, the rebellion in Iraq acted as a kind of safety valve which prevented an explosion. It was the first sign of the liberation of the Arab world, and we followed the course of the revolt with admiration.

Now seemed to be the golden opportunity for General Aziz.

Masri—the man who had lived and fought in the Arab countries under the Ottoman Empire. Might he become the decisive factor in the struggle between Britain and Germany on the banks of the Euphrates? We saw him as an intrepid soldier and an incomparable chief. No one could do more than he to hold the Egyptian forces together and to win vital German support for the Arab cause.

But the old rebel took a different view of the situation. We, the young officers, wanted to attack the British and make Egypt a second Iraq. Rashid Aly had given the signal for the war of liberation, it was our duty to rush to his aid. To our great surprise, Aziz EL Masti refused to share our enthusiasm. He received the news from Bagdad with skepticism. He said: "You don't know Iraqi politicians as well as I do!" He told us remarkable stories about the political ethics of some of the Arab leaders he had known at the time of the Turks. No doubt he foresaw that Rashid Aly would be stabbed in the back. He was.

One day in March, 1941, an agent of the Wehrmacht sought out Aziz EL Masri at his home and gave him a message from Germany. The Germans, it said, thought highly of the General's patriotic activities, and they would be happy to make use of his military experience in collaboration.

If he, on his side, wished to cooperate with Germany, he had only to make his plans known. Germany would see to their execution.

There was one difficulty, however: the British Intelligence Service. To my great surprise, Colonel Moussa Loutfi, chief of the Egyptian C.I.D., informed me that our activities were known to his department, and that the Intelligence Service was keeping a vigilant eye on us.

I, in turn, warned Aziz EL hlasri. After discussing the matter at length, we decided to accept the German proposition. But how was the General to get out of the country? His first idea was to escape to Beirut in a German submarine, which he would board in Lake Borollos, near the Canal Zone.

I had a friend in the Egyptian cavalry stationed in the Canal Zone. At my invitation he came to Cairo, discussed the project with the General and then returned to Borollos to reconnoiter. It came to

nothing. We examined the plan from every angle and decided it was certain to fail.

We then considered the possibility of escaping by airplane. The Germans approved the idea and asked us to designate a disused airfield where a Luftwaffe plane could land and pick up the General and his companions.

We decided from the map that the best airfield would be EL Khataba, and the General and I went together in his small car to reconnoiter the area. A pilot came with us. we took the road past the barrages and then turned off along the Rayah EL Beheri Canal. When we arrived at Khataba we drove across the bridge and turned the car towards the Western Desert. Imagine our stupefaction when we saw that there were enormous army depots lining both sides of the road and the place was swarming with British troops. We drove past the airfield and

returned to Cairo along the desert road to avoid British encampments.

The Germans did not like our choice of landing ground. They designated another place near Gabel Rozza on the Oasis Road. The Germans were right. The ground at Gabel Rozza was hard and level, and their choice showed that they knew our deserts perfectly. No doubt the German "explorers" who visited Egypt shortly before the war had contributed something to that knowledge.

A rendezvous was fixed for dawn on a certain day, and we were told what recognition signals to give the aircraft. The day was a Saturday. I was in a military hospital feigning illness, in order to avoid being drafted

the Western Desert.

But fate was against the project. Aziz EL Masri's car broke down on the way to the landing ground

and it was impossible to repair it. A German aircraft, bearing

the insignia of the R.A.F., arrived at the rendezvous, but turned back when it found the General was not there.

The old warrior refused to be discouraged. He was determined to reach the German lines and he made one more attempt. He arranged with Squadron-Leader Hussein Zulficar to make his escape aboard an Egyptian military aircraft. They were to take off on the next night that Zulficar was in command of the airfield. But assuredly fate was against the General. The aircraft hit a post on takeoff and crashed. The fugitives miraculously escaped with their lives. They were arrested and imprisoned on a charge of conspiring against the security of the State.

I still think that if ill luck had not so dogged our enterprise, we might have struck a quick blow at the

British, joined forces with the Axis and changed the course of events.

As it was, the formidable reserves of violence in the Egyptian people remained latent and suppressed. It was all the more certain that revolution would come.

Chapter Four

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE had to keep changing its tactics to meet the changing situation of the war. When Britain showed the smallest weakness, that was the time to act.

We were no longer the feeble and flabby Egypt of the First World War. Britain faced a country which was determined to achieve its independence at all costs. As the tide of war turned against them, the British stiffened in their attitude to the Egyptian government, and they began to put on pressure. Soon, the British arrogance knew no bounds, as was demonstrated in the famous incident of February 4th,1942.

When Rommel launched his attack in the Western Desert in January of that year, it seemed clear to the British that an offensive on such a scale could only

have been mounted by the connivance of marshal Petain with Hitler and Mussolini. Accordingly, in February,

1942 ,the governments of Hussein Sirry broke off diplomatic relations with Vichy France at the "request" of the British government. But the British did not approve of Hussein Sirry. They "requested" immediately afterwards that Sirry should be dismissed and Nahas Pasha called to power. Farouk resigned, and a crisis resulted.

On February 4th, 1942, there was a demonstration against the British in the streets of Cairo The cry went up: "Rommel! Rommel!" It made an ideal pretext for the British, and they acted instantly. A squadron of tanks and armored cars surrounded the Royal Palace and smashed through the gates of the courtyard.

Sir Miles Lampson, the British Ambassador, walked into the Palace surrounded by South Africa,

officers carrying pistols. A court official approached them. Lampson brushed the man aside saying: "I know my way." He walked into the King's study and presented him with an ultimatum: Farouk could either appoint Nahas Pasha as Prime Minister within twenty-four hours, or lose his throne.

A great deal has been written about this incident, and many writers have classed it as a political "story." In fact, because of the events which followed, it emerges as one of the crucial incidents in contemporary Egyptian history. The king lost face. Virtually a prisoner in his own palace, he played an obscure and insignificant role for the rest of the war.

Up till now the King had been synonymous with the patriotic idea, and the violation of the Royal Palace was regarded by all patriotic Egyptians as an outrage against Egypt herself. But from now on Farouk changed utterly, and Egypt began to despair

of him. He had suffered a severe shock, which was followed by chronic nervous depression.

Unstable and anxious by temperament, Farouk became the prey of psychological inhibitions. He suffered from persecution mania. He was irascible and violent. He lived at night and slept during the day. It became gradually obvious that he was a paranoiac. He underwent a physical change at the same time. He became very fat and prematurely aged.

The result of the British *coup* of February 4th, 1942, was to impose upon Egypt two years of dictatorship by the Wafd—two years of nepotism, jobbery and peculation which thoroughly discredited the major nationalist party in Egypt. The government's incompetence, and a series of scandals, embittered the already discontented public, while the Muslim Brotherhood gained in prestige and popularity.

Meanwhile, the British tried to break down Egyptian resistance by applying the formula—no longer original, but one in which they are particularly adept— of divide and rule. They tried to turn the people against the Egyptian Army, representing it as a kind of Praetorian Guard of Farouk's, an instrument of oppression which the King would not hesitate to use against the people if they showed any sign of unrest. It was a clever idea, whose true nature was only later to become apparent to the Egyptian people.

The officers of our revolutionary group met at Zamalek to discuss the possibility of avenging the British insult of February 4th. But Egypt was not ready to fight, and impetuous action might have compromised our future aims. Moderation won the day, but the hostility of the Egyptian Army resulted in the immobilization of considerable British forces,

which Britain could more usefully have employed elsewhere.

This latest affront to our country gave a new stimulus to the revolutionary movement. Abdul Nasser and Abdul Hakim Amer determined that Egypt must never again suffer such a humiliation. The real revolutionary conspiracy dates back to this time. The movement had now passed from the theoretic to the militant phase. Recruitment was stepped up. Abdul Nasser, during the course of the year, was appointed as an instructor at the Military College, where he came into contact with hundreds of cadets and was able to select the best elements for the revolutionary movement. If he had made one false step, or if anyone had informed on him, he would have been instantly court-martialled.

Such, in my view, were the effects of the incident of February 4th, 1942. The political and psychological repercussions were immense.

The war situation changed dramatically at the beginning of July, 1942. Fortune betrayed the Allies. Hong Kong, Singapore, the Dutch East Indies and Malaya fell to the Japanese. The losses of the Royal Navy were so heavy that the Admiralty had nothing left in the Eastern Mediterranean but a skeleton fleet of a few cruisers and destroyers. In Russia, the Germans had conquered the Ukraine and were advancing towards the Caucasus. In the Middle East, the British ,were defeated in Libya. Forty thousand British prisoners were captured at Tobruk and the Africa Corps stormed across North Africa to reach EL Alamein, at the gates of Alexandria. The Luftwaffe, master of the skies, bombed the retreating British without respite. ~he British forces in the Middle East were isolated. Britain openly began preparations for the evacuation of Cairo and Alexandria. The civilians left. The British Embassy burned its papers. It seemed that the end was near.

Egypt had been patient. We had suffered insult and provocation, and now we prepared to fight side by side with the Axis to hasten England's defeat.

The plan of our revolutionary group was as follows. We would carry out a military *coaf d'etat* in Cairo, overthrow the Wafd government under Nahas Pasha, and put Aly Maher back in power. The Egyptian Army would harry the British forces. We would join up with the Axis troops, and the fate of the British Empire would be sealed. The Revolutionary Committee assigned to me the task of informing the Muslim Brotherhood about our plan.

The Supreme Guide was the only man in the Muslim Brotherhood with whom we had any contact, and Hassan EL Banna took care to keep it so. I remember once, when I went to see him, he was engaged in conversation with one of the vice-presidents of the Brotherhood. He took great care that this man did not see me. I was made to

wait in another room on another floor, which Hassan EL Banna presently entered by a hidden door. Without a word, he took my arm, conducted me to a car and we drove to his home, where the interview took place in his carefully shuttered study.

I went straight to the point in my conversation with Hassan EL Banna. I told him that the time had come for action. I explained our plan and the role which we hoped his followers would play in it.

The old man, with his sad eyes and black beard, listened attentively. He murmured a few words in a low voice, as though talking to himself. Then he burst into tears. Presently he recovered himself and began talking enthusiastically about our plan. His soul was moved, he said, by the vision of Egypt in arms, marching towards her deliverance. The welfare of Egypt \vas the thing he cared more about than anything else in the mortal world. He reflected for a moment, and then, with a smile that failed to

mask his uneasiness, he said: "We are ready to come to your aid at any time."

His heart was with us, but he had not spoken the words I expected of him. He had not expressly approved our plan, he had not said that his troops would join forces with us when the signal for action was given. He had simply promised the support of the government, without specifying whether this support would be total or partial, material or moral. But he came out of his habitual reserve and gave me some information about the arms and training of the paramilitary formations at his disposal. Finally, he asked me to propose to the Committee that our revolutionary group join the Muslim Brotherhood.

I objected that the ideology of the Brotherhood was

essentially different from ours, and that the merger would be virtual suicide for our party. We were an Army organization, and on principle we avoided tying ourselves to other groups. Both we and the

Brotherhood shared the same immediate objective—the overthrow of the present regime—and we should concentrate on this program of action rather than on the precise political structure of the future.

Hassan EL Banna was vague and enigmatic in his replies. I do not know if he doubted himself or if he doubted us. His mind alternated between hope and fear, enthusiasm and pessimism, the secular and the sacred, and this sometimes prevented him from taking the objective view of a situation and the opportunities which presented themselves. He believed that the people should rise up in religious exaltation, yet he never succeeded in mobilizing the spirit of revolution which existed on all sides, he never brought that explosive mood to a point of concentration where it could be detonated with maximum effect. In the atmosphere of mystery with which he surrounded himself, it was easy for him to

create the impression that he had mighty forces at his disposal, yet he always avoided committing himself on their deployment.

This was the last interview I had with Hassan EL Banna before my arrest and imprisonment. It showed that we had built too high hopes on the Muslim

Brotherhood. The truth was that we could rely on nobody to make the revolution but ourselves.

Despite the elaborate precautions I took, I was caught by the British Counter Espionage Service with two of Rommel's agents, while working on a plan for a combined operation by our joint forces against the British.

The story began one evening in June, as the Nazi advance on EL Alamein reached its peak, when there were three light taps on the door of an Army colleague, Major Hassan Ezzat. Herr Appler and

Herr Sandy, agents sent by Marshal Rommel, presented themselves. Hassan Ezzat immediately brought them to me. The two young Nazis had been seconded from the Africa corps in Cyrenaica to carry out this special mission for the Intelligence Service of the Wehrmacht.

Hans Appler knew Egypt inside out. His German mother had made a second marriage to an Egyptian magistrate, and she brought her son to Egypt. He had an Egyptian education, he spoke perfect Arabic, and he adopted his stepfather's surname. Hans Appler became Hussein Gaafer. But Hussein turned out badly. He mixed with doubtful company and spent his nights in the cabarets, to the great distress of his stepfather, who tried to bring him back to the straight and narrow path, but eventually gave up the attempt. Hussein returned to Germany in 1939, just before the war, and became Hans Appler again. He was called up when war broke out

and employed on special duties by the Wehtmacht as an expert on Egyptian affairs.

The two men arrived in Egypt with a radio transmitter and £40.000 in false banknotes, printed in Greece. They set out from the German lines disguised as British officers in a British military vehicle, and they drove into Egypt along the little-used route that runs south of the Siwa Oasis. They reached Kharga, where they turned on to the main road for Assiout.

This was the most dangerous part of the journey, for the road passed through a military zone with many check points. Halfway, they ran out of gasoline. Appler said he coolly drove into a British camp, showed his papers, filled up and drove away, returning the salute of the sentries as he left. From Assiout to Cairo they had a clear run.

Once in Cairo, the two spies traded their British uniforms for civilian clothes and immediately got in

touch with us. we examined their documents, which proved beyond doubt that they were what they purported to be. They at once established radio contact with the German High Command.

One day they asked me if I would repair their radio transmitter, which had broken down. As a Signals Officer I knew something about radio, and I said I would do it for them. I was astonished to discover that they had set up their quarters with a celebrated dancer, Hekmat Fahmy, in a house boat on the Nile.

Appler laughed at my surprise. "You didn't expect us to look for lodgings in a British barracks, did you?"

This was not the only thing that disturbed me. They told me they had changed their £40,000 in false banknotes into Egyptian money through the

agency of a Jew. The Jew took 33 1/3 percent commission. It seemed to me foolhardy to deal through a stranger.

I went down to the houseboat to repair the radio, and I was astonished to see that the transmitting aerial was perfectly visible from the outside.

I began to be worried. What did the Jew know about the source of the money he had changed? He had taken an exorbitant commission, but was it enough to keep his mouth shut? And what role was the dancer playing in this curious affair?

I rang the bell, and she opened the door. The two Germans were there. I glanced around the room in which I found myself, and I was quickly enlightened about the sort of life which these young Nazis were living. The place was furnished like something out of the *,Arabian Nights.* In these soft and voluptuous surroundings, it was clear that Appler and Sandy

were rapidly forgetting the mission for which they had been sent to Egypt.

I looked around for the transmitter. The room seemed to be full of bottles of perfume and whisky. Appler took me out into the hall and showed me a phonograph, with a lid of carved wood. Under the lid there was the usual pickup and turntable, but by pressing a catch the whole top of the phonograph opened up to reveal a space big enough to contain transmitter and operator. A small lamp illuminated the space, and the operator, once inside, could be hidden from view by closing the lid on top of him. While he worked, the phonograph played dance music . . . It would need a clever investigator to guess that inside this commonplace article of furniture there was a secret transmitter sending messages to the Wehrmacht.

I got inside the space to examine the transmitter. It was a solid piece of work, and it had been

carefully installed. I could not find out where the fault was. Suddenly a doubt crossed my mind.

I told the Germans I could find nothing wrong with the set. They seemed troubled by this, and they asked me if I knew a Swede named X (using a password). I did know X, a diplomat in the Swedish Embassy at Cairo, who had looked after the interests of German nationals in Egypt since the German Embassy closed on the declaration of war. The two Germans asked me to get in touch with X, adding, after a moment's hesitation, that the Swede had supplied them with another

transmitter, but they did not know how to work it. I asked them to show me the set. It was an American Hallicrafter, in perfect working order and easy to handle.

My suspicions about these two young men were now confirmed. With thousands of pounds to spend on girls and easy living, they were trying to spin out their stay in Egypt as long as they could. They had put their first transmitter out of action and then told X they had no set. X got in touch with the German High Command, who had ordered that another transmitter should be secured for them. Now they had one transmitter out of order, and a second which they said they could not work.

I stumbled across their game too late. The second time I went to the houseboat I found the pair of them dead drunk with two Jewesses. They were arrested the following day.

I at once informed the Committee. It was important to find out how they had been caught, because the British Intelligence Service, having once uncovered Nazi spies in Cairo, had doubtless

gone to a lot of trouble to find out who their Egyptian contacts were.

I was now in danger, but I was chiefly disturbed in case the British got a lead on our secret organization by uncovering my link with the two Germans. This would have been a catastrophe for the movement.

Major Hassan Ezzat, who was a member of our cell, was arrested two days after the Germans were arrested. I was taken the day following. I had not expected to be arrested so soon. I had supposed the Intelligence Service would give me a longer run, keeping me under surveillance in order to uncover the revolutionary network. But the British never uncovered our organization. It was not even their men who had discovered the Germans, for they had been betrayed by the two amiable young Jewesses in whose company I had found them on my last

visit. These ladies of doubtful virtue had been promised £200 for their services. What matter if they got it from the young Nazis or from the British Intelligence Service?

The British interrogated the Germans for twenty four hours, but they refused to talk. It happened that Winston Churchill was passing through Cairo at this time, and he said he would like to interrogate the spies himself. Brought before Churchill, the Germans at first persisted in their silence, but when the Prime Minister promised that their lives would be spared, they talked. As a result I was arrested on a charge of conspiring against the security of the State in time of war. I was tried before two British Intelligence officers and one Egyptian police officer.

An Egyptian Army officer appearing, before British military judges—this was the end! Our indignation knew no bounds when we discovered that this special court had been empowered to try

Egyptian citizens by order of Nahas Pasha's government.

I refused to make a statement or give any information. I was cashiered from the Army, sentenced, and imprisoned in a detention camp at miniah on October 8th, 1942.

I reflected on the myth of the British Secret Service. In the minds of many people, it has become a dark legend, an organization of fantastic power, whose tentacles extend everywhere. The reality is a little different. Nobody will deny the power and ability of the Secret Service, but it is a long way from being the "all seeing eye" of popular legend. What keeps the British Secret Service functioning is simply money, and the irresistible temptation which money represents to rogues and traitors. But the Egyptian patriots—they were men of a different stamp.

It was not my arrest which prevented the revolution from taking place. It was Egyptian treason. The patriots were hunted down and there were mass arrests. Nahas Pasha and his colleagues were serving the British, who had put them into power. This roundup

of pro-Axis Egyptians took place just as the fortunes of war changed in favor of the British.

On October 19th, 1942, the Allies defeated the Germans at the Battle of Alamein, and the Eighth Army pursued the enemy along the North African littoral as far as Tunisia. The Russians won the Battle of Stalingrad and launched a counteroffensive in the Caucasus. Thus, both arms of the German pincer movement on Egypt were broken, and Egyptian hopes were broken too.

The French fleet, immobilized at Alexandria, was put at the disposal of General Giraud. The war flowed back from the Middle East. Russian resistance and the arms buildup of the Allies made it clear that the Axis was going to lose the war. The liberation of Egypt was not for tomorrow. England, unlike Carthage, was not to be destroyed.

Henceforth, the people of the Nile Valley knew that they could count on no-one but themselves. There would be no help from outside.

We were not discouraged. We had absolute faith in our cause, and it was only a question of time before Egypt came to be the arbiter of her own destiny.

CHAPTER FIVE

TIME HUNG heavily in the detention camp at Miniah. I was parted from my comrades and my work. I was a young man, and I found the inactivity of prison life hard to bear. Reading and meditation made the loneliness more supportable, but I longed for Cairo, my home and my family. What of their future? I had no means beyond my Army pay, which I had now forfeited. How could I support my wife and family?

Life seemed miserable indeed, but one morning, when I was on my way to the camp library, I was agreeably surprised to receive the visit of an old friend, Captain Mohammed Wagih Khalil, a man of fine intelligence who died a hero's death in the Palestine War. Mohammed whispered good news in my ear. The Revolutionary Committee was paying

my family a subsistence allowance Of £10 a month, and I need no longer worry about their future.

I shall never forget this act of solidarity. My friends had proved their loyalty, and this was balm to my soul during the bitter time of imprisonment. All those who have fought for an ideal will know that it is not the fear of death or torture that causes a man to weaken, but the thought of what may happen to his wife and children, who are weak and defenseless.

Now I knew that at least they would be provided with food and shelter during my imprisonment. The Revolutionary Committee had decided to pay an allowance to the dependants of any member of the organization who was arrested while carrying out the work of the organization.

Assured of the well-being of my family, I could now meditate at leisure on the problems of our country. I have always mistrusted theories and purely rational systems. I believe in the power of concrete facts, and the realities of history and experience. my political ideas grew out of my personal experience of oppression, not out of abstract notions. I am a soldier, not a theoretician, and it was by an empirical process that I came to realize my country needed a political system which responded to its essential needs and reflected its true spirit.

The problem was to get Egypt out of the Middle Ages, to turn it from a semi-feudal country into a modern, ordered, viable State, while at the same time

respecting the customs of the people. On this last point, respecting the customs of the people

does not mean chaining them down to a dead past; it means respecting the essential and invisible continuities in a nation's life. we would conserve everything that did not impede the real progress of the community.

I began to think of escaping from prison—and I was not the only one to entertain this thought. ~ly friend Abdul I`loneim Abdul Raouf worked out a plan for the escape of General Aziz EL Masri and myself, with the aid of members of our organization in the Egyptian Air Force. These aviators were the bravest men in our organization. They were ready to face any danger, no doubt because a cool brain and nerves of steel are the first requirements of their profession.

The plan involved a series of rapid and audacious actions. An attack was to be launched against the fortified camp where Aziz EL Masri was held prisoner. He was to be rescued and driven immediately to Miniah, where a simultaneous assault was to set me free. meanwhile, an Egyptian military aircraft -would have taken off from Cairo, and was to land at AlMniah and pick up the General as soon as I had escaped. The airplane would fly straight to Istanbul.

Here was another project that failed to materialize. The plan was too rigid, and the exact timing and synchronization of the three different phases of the operation would have been difficult to achieve. Willy-nilly, we had to abandon the idea. Fate decreed that we must wait. Patience is also a form of courage.

This set-back, following upon so many others, led to a falling-off in the activities of our organization. There was a time of inertia and depression, when the idea of a revolution seemed very far off. Nevertheless, important developments occurred on the Egyptian political scene during this period.

The King, as we have seen, became a changed man after the incident of February 4th, 1942. A prey to prejudice, ignorance and illusion, Farouk now came to be regarded as one of our chief enemies.

Ahmed Maher returned to power in 1944. We placed high hopes upon him, for we had been encouraged by the tough policy he had adopted towards the British two years previously. He took immediate measures to reduce tension in Egypt and

pronounced an amnesty for all political detainees—except members of our organization. Not only did he make a particular exception of us; he ordered that we should be watched more vigilantly than before. I learned later that this "order" had been given following a "request" by the British Embassy. Such was the subtlety of the political vocabulary in Egypt at this time . . .

Hassan EL Banna was now one of the most powerful

men in Egypt, and the King acknowledged his power. But EL Banna, too, changed his line. He cared more for the Muslim Brotherhood than for the nation. He held aloof from other nationalist groups in order to work for the ascendancy of the Brotherhood in what he hoped would be an atmosphere of calm, but which turned out to be a very troubled atmosphere indeed. The Muslim

Brotherhood became more and more involved in politics. The movement lost sight of its original aims and became perverted and dominated by a mystique of violence. My friend Abdul Moneim Abdul Raouf gave himself body and soul to the Brotherhood, and this idealistic man was to become involved in a campaign of terror and assassination, finally being implicated in the attempt on President Nasser's life on October 28th, 1954.

One bright morning I escaped from the prison camp at Miniah. It was in November, 1944, one month after Ahmed Maher's return to power.

I breathed again the air of freedom, but, hunted by the Secret Police, I had continually to change my disguise and move from place to place. I lived the hard life of a fugitive, working at strange jobs to

earn a little money, until martial law was rescinded in 1945.

At this time, the Committee began to reorganize our revolutionary group on a new basis in the light of experience and in preparation for the coming struggle for power. The revolutionary sections were divided into two groups: the military group and the popular group.

The first group, under the leadership of Gamal Abdul Nasser, was composed of all our adherents in the Army. The second group, comprising the revolutionary cells outside the Army, was placed under my command. The Central Committee remained the directing power which coordinated the activities of all our formations. The military and popular groups worked as separate formations. No link was tO be revealed between them until the opportune moment arrived.

The history of our secret preparations is a story of hard work, determination and sacrifice. I was always eager to step up the pace, but Gamal, a man of deliberation, acted as a restraining influence.

One event at this time afforded us a possibility of intervention. In February, 1945, Alhmed Maher declared war on Germany and Japan, and on the same day he was assassinated in Parliament by a member of the Muslim Brotherhood. Nokrachy Pasha succeeded him, and the new Prime Minister's first action was to visit the British Ambassador to remind him of Egypt's claims.

Lord Killearn (formerly Sir Miles Lampson) did not receive him. He simply exchanged a few words with him at the foot of the staircase. He lost patience as

soon as Nokrachy began to speak of Egypt's national claims. He shrugged his shoulders and dismissed the Prime Minister with the words: "The question of evacuation and of the Sudan do not arise at this time."

the details of this singular interview, when they became known, caused widespread public indignation.

I went to see Gamal Abdul Nasser and put up a plan for revenge. My idea was to blow up the British Embassy and everybody in it. The Popular Section would carry out the operation. Gamal listened attentively, and then shook his head and said no. He reminded me of the terrible reprisals which had followed the murder in 1924 of Sir Lee Stack, Sirdar and Governor-general of the Sudan.

"That tragedy must not be repeated," said Abdul Nasser.

Chapter Six

AT EXACTLY five o'clock on the afternoon of October 8th, 1944, the Egyptian Radio was broadcasting a concert of light music when the program was suddenly interrupted by a special communiqué. The well-known voice of Mohammed Said Loutfi, director of the Egyptian Radio, announced the fall of the Nahas government—the government which had been sponsored by British tanks.

The announcer's voice betrayed his joy. Those who knew the background of the affair understood why: for three years Loutfi's life had been made miserable by the constant bickering between King and government.

The government had constantly humiliated the King, who lost no opportunity of taking his revenge. If the quarrel had been for Egypt's sake, there would have been less cause for complaint. But this was a struggle for power in which Nahas and the King opposed each other in England's name, not Egypt's. In these skirmishes the King more than once suffered defeat, and he was longing for the day when he would deal a deathblow to the government which had so trampled upon his dignity.

This petty game of pin-pricking placed the Egyptian Radio authorities in a very difficult position. On one occasion, for example, the King ordered that readings from the Koran should be broadcast from the Palace during the month of Ramadan. Technicians and equipment were immediately sent to prepare the broadcasts. But because the idea had been Farouk's, the govern-ment objected, and sent its minions to remove both

technicians and equipment from the Palace: a rather embarrassing situation for the Director, who was obliged to give and receive orders and counter orders on the same day.

Then the Wafd decided to make a tour of the provinces, and ordered that a complete report should be broadcast. The King, listening in, heard the frenzied cheers which greeted his Prime Minister and the speeches crammed with party propaganda. Infuriated, he informed the unfortunate Director of his displeasure, in his customary well-chosen vocabulary.

The Radio was thus in the delicate situation of having to satisfy three masters: the King, the Wafd government, and the British. It is easy to understand the joyfulness of the voice which

announced the fall of Nahas Pasha, and his replacement as Prime Minister by Ahmed Maher.

On that day—I was still in prison—we were listening on a radio set which we were allowed to use when the camp authorities were satisfied as to our good conduct. I heard the news with joy. It was, it seemed to me, the first result of the ultimatum of February 4th. My enthusiasm was so great that it did not occur to me to wonder what the real reasons were for the King's decision. Farouk certainly did not act on his own initiative, and probably consulted the British Embassy before taking such an important step. Now that the Germans and Italians had been expelled from Africa, and the Axis was virtually defeated, the British had no further use for Nahas, and permitted the King to dismiss him without ceremony.

Ahmed Maher, as I have already stated, freed most of the prisoners, but thought it necessary to keep behind barbed wire a small group of patriots, of whom I was one, who were considered to be a danger to the public. Seeing that there was now no alternative, I decided to escape.

I regained my freedom only to be confronted by a number of unpleasant facts.

One of the things which troubled me most was the King's visit to Churchill at the British Embassy. How could the man, in whose person the whole of Egypt had been insulted on February 4th, 1942, so easily forget the indignity which he had suffered? His action was Unworthy of a sovereign, unworthy of the country he represented. But has Farouk ever possessed dignity? Being incapable of self-respect, how could he respect his throne or his country? One was forced to the bitter conclusion that what had

wounded Egypt so deeply in the person of its King, had not touched the King at all.

I escaped only to find that the Palace of Ras-El-Tin, the second official palace, had been converted into a military hospital, not for the officers and men of the Egyptian Army, but for the British.

I escaped only to find that Farouk, ignoring the responsibilities of his position, had dashed the high hopes placed in him, and had greeted the Americans with open arms, spending his time hunting, gaming and drinking with them. It seemed as if he sought in :heir friendship a solid prop against the day when the 3ritish would abandon him.

For he sensed that the British would desert him, and he idea became a neurotic obsession. He always followed the movements of British troops very closely, imagining that they were massing in order to take his throne from him—which, in fact, they had done to several of his predecessors. During these crises, he used

to seek refuge in the Castle of Inchass, as if it had some mystic power of sanctuary.

He was now a docile and passive instrument in the hands of the British, and was therefore listed as our Enemy Number One. All the political forces of the country seemed to have entered the enemy camp: the king, the Wafd, the Saadist Party. The Muslim Brotherhood alone remained in the field. Could we count on them? In order to find a reply to this question, it was necessary to re-establish contact with the Brotherhood.

Once again I began to visit the Supreme Guide. His integrity, intelligence and increasing popularity surrounded him with such an extraordinary aura that his followers began to fear he might be assassinated by jealous enemies. In spite of the close friendship between us, Sheikh Hassan EL Banna—always a silent, secret man—hid much from me. For once, however, he opened his heart, and told me of his difficulties.

He told me that the King had begun to appreciate the danger to himself which lay in the Brotherhood's propaganda, having learned that one of the Brotherhood's aims was to do away with the hereditary monarchy, and substitute an electoral one.

The Supreme Guide suspected the King of plotting to crush the movement, and feared that he might act before the Brotherhood had reached the height of its power. For the first time my friend acknowledged that his movement was by no means invulnerable. Usually he liked to give the impression that the Brotherhood was a giant of enormous power, possessing limitless resources.

Moreover, the Europeans in Egypt were becoming alarmed at the increasing power of the Brotherhood, who aimed to replace the Civil Code by Islamic law. They foresaw that such a change would endanger their property and trade, and would mean the loss of the civil rights guaranteed by the existing laws of the Egyptian Constitution.

This hostility from two different quarters severely curtailed and jeopardized the propagandist activities of the Brotherhood, while any coalition between the King and the foreign colonials would be fatal to the movement.

I listened carefully to the Supreme Guide, commenting occasionally. Hassan EL Banna lowered his eyes, as if collecting his thoughts before launching on a new tack.

He would like, he told me, to make the situation quite clear. The foreigners would be reassured, if only the King himself could be persuaded to offer them reassurance. Then, watching me very carefully, he said:

"If I could meet the King, I flatter myself that I could set his mind at rest." He was obviously quite certain

that he could allay the King's suspicions, and he made it clear that this was not an attempt to reach an understanding with the King, but simply a tactical plan to divert his attention.

Without further ado, he asked me if I knew Dr. Youssef Rachad, the King's personal physician, who was thought to possess great influence over Farouk. I replied that I did. The Guide wanted Rachad to persuade the King to receive him, so that he might plead the cause of the Brotherhood.

I promised to do my best, though I could not help wondering if my intervention was wise. I was, after all, an escaped prisoner, hunted by the police, living an uneasy, hidden life. However, I went to Dr. Youssef Rachad and explained my mission. He promised to do everything in his power.

When I next saw the doctor, he told me that he had brought up the question while speaking to the King on the telephone. As soon as the Guide's name was mentioned, Farouk hung up, and on his next visit to the palace, the doctor was taxed with his carelessness: "How dare you mention such a subject on the telephone? Surely you know that Hassan Rifaat intercepts my calls?"

I was astonished. So Farouk felt himself spied upon from all sides. He was even afraid of the Under-Secretary of State of his own government.

Once again I begged the doctor to help. This time he obtained permission from the King to receive Sheikh EL Banna himself, and to-report their conversation.

Just as I was going out to meet Youssef Rachad to fix the date of the meeting, the telephone rang: "Forget what we said about Hassan EL Banna." The King had changed his mind.

I realized that there was no use insisting, and said so to the Guide.

The days passed. At last martial law was lifted, and I was able to take up my life again.

One evening the Guide, accompanied by one of his lieutenants, Mahmoud Labib, came to visit me at my home in Ezbet EL Nakhl. During dinner, he discoursed on the need for national unity, and on other safe topics, referring only in veiled terms to the question of his relations with the King. The

presence of the lieutenant had made him cautious. Reading between the lines, I realized that he wished me to renew my efforts to obtain an audience with the King. I gave him to understand that I would do it.

On the following day I went to Alexandria. This fresh attempt sent the King into a towering rage. For

several days he refused to see Youssef Rachad, and when the doctor was eventually readmitted, the King said coldly: "Never mention that subject to me again."

I should add that the King, seized by some doubt, finally did tell the doctor to meet Hassan EL Banna. The meeting took place some time later. Afterwards, Youssef Rachad told me that he, personally, had been convinced of the Supreme Guide's sincerity,

but when he reported to this effect to the King, Farouk cried: "Hassan EL Banna has made a fool of you!" It was useless for the doctor to protest, for Farouk simply roared with laughter, and repeated: "Hassan EL Banna has made a fool of you!"

Youssef Rachad told me several years later that, during the last days of the Ibrahim Abdul-Hadi government, the King had said to him: "We were wrong in being so harsh with the Muslim Brotherhood. We should have gone back to our old policy."

"And what exactly was that policy?" I asked.

"God knows!" said Youssef Rachad.

It appears, however, that in 1946 the King was in touch was Hassan EL Banna, and for a short time adopted a conciliatory attitude. But after the Brotherhood's dramatic rise to power as a result of the war in Palestine, the King again changed his mind and broke off relations. This vacillation and unreliability was characteristic of Farouk.

Chapter Seven

THE YEAR 1945 saw the opening of a new phase in the history of our secret preparations. The events described in the earlier part of this book were almost all directed by emotion, often quite irrational. From now on, our actions were controlled by a carefully-thought-out plan, aiming at a specific target.

For soon the hour for concerted action would come. Gamal Abdul Nasser was taking careful stock of the situation, choosing the moment when he would give the signal, and the fight for freedom would begin. Egypt had waited long for this moment.

The war with Germany ended on May 8th, 1945. New hope was born in the world. There was an optimistic belief that an age of justice was about to begin, that peace would reign among all men, and that the Atlantic Charter meant the beginning of a new, free life. Can one really blame people for their credulity, for their trust in promises so solemnly made and so often repeated?

We, too, had longed for the end of the war, but not because we believed in these fine promises. To us, the cessation of hostilities meant the lifting of that sword of Damocles—martial law—which had held us at the mercy of the British Intelligence Service.

Progress is almost invariably accompanied by a period of intellectual ferment. It was so in Egypt,

where the revolutionary movement could not have made its appearance at a more propitious moment. Egypt had emerged from her medieval chrysalis under the enormous impact of the war.

The old Egypt was dying, and it was the intellectual union of the cultured classes and the masses which saved the new Egypt from disintegration. The University has a fine record of active political demonstration, and it was the students—instinctively on the side of the proletariat and the oppressed—who effected the spiritual revolution so necessary to our political revolution. The intellectual feels the need to "place himself" in society; to him, our movement was a source of life in a dying country.

Now the intellectual and the politically conscious man in the street felt alike: *things must change.* What had seemed impossible before now seemed within our grasp. The battle was halfway won.

Gamal Abdul Nasser was at the helm. He has the politician's flair for understanding the true aspirations of the people, on which, in the long run, the fate of a country must depend. He drew up a realistic balance sheet of our strength and weaknesses before making the next move. Egypt's future was not to be thrown away in a wild gamble.

The country was in a state of complete social and political confusion. The government, completely lacking in imagination and drive, was incapable of satisfying the aspirations of the people, and it opened the way to disorder, unrest, and finally,

revolution. Careerists, traitors and imperialists were grabbing all they could.

Several obstacles still blocked our way. The first was the mistaken idea which many good people held of the Army: that it was a weapon in the hands of the King, which he would use to tame his subjects should they rise in protest. This conception of the Army as a Praetorian Guard was, of course, carefully nourished by reactionaries and imperialists, whose interests lay in the maintenance of a gulf between the Army and the people.

Thus, if the people feared the King, it was not his person or his position which inspired fear. It was the fact that, as Commander-in-Chief of the Army, its troops were at his disposal.

This was far from the truth. The Egyptian Army was no longer composed of Mamelukes or mercenaries, as it had been at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Its roots were in the people, its problems and its hopes were those of the people. But the people were uncertain where the loyalties of the Army lay, and they dared not make a bid for freedom by rising in revolt, for fear of reprisals by fire and sword. This foolish fear raised a barrier which it was not easy to break down.

Our second obstacle was the coalition between the King, the political parties and the clerical reactionaries —a powerful alliance, propped up by the British, whose ends it served.

The King was well aware of the abyss which separated him from the people. His familiars—

worthless courtiers and self-seeking advisers—urged him to make no reforms or concessions. They argued that one concession would lead to another until the people became so demanding that the monarchy itself might be threatened. Speaking for the King, and trying to justify his master's attitude, Ahmed Hassanein used to say:

"When the King took a stand against the British, the people did not stir. But when the British humiliated our King by forcing the Nahas government on him, the people cheered Nahas and refused to take up the challenge." The argument ran that if Farouk was now collaborating with the British, it was because the Egyptian people showed on February 4th that they would not fight for him.

The coalition government included some minor political parties which had only come to power by means of electoral fraud, and by sowing discord between the King and the Wafdist party. They, too, were not above collaboration with the British.

As for the Wafd, which controlled Parliament, it was now steeped in corruption, having joined forces politically with the feudalists and the court party. There was nothing more to hope for from a party which had itself torn up the roots which bound it to the people.

Thirdly, there was the obstacle of the clerical re-actionaries.

The Egyptian is a religious man. He has a deep respect for all religions, and for spiritual values. But religion is one thing, its exploitation for political purposes quite another. It must not be given a purpose which it does not inherently possess. If a religion is turned into a political system, then fanaticism is born. This confusion of temporal power with the spiritual has been the downfall of many Oriental societies.

I should mention, too, the barrier of inertia and ignorance which we frequently encountered among the

masses. The moral weaknesses of irresolution, resignation, hypocrisy and fear had been drilled into them by a long history of suffering and humiliation.

I have no wish to make a long catalogue of all the factors which contributed to the fall of the old regime. Only the desire for truth has persuaded me to suppress my repugnance at having tO display Egypt's weaknesses and blemishes to the world. The sight of all these wrongs aroused the indignation of a group of good citizens, who rallied to the banner of revolution, and who never doubted that justice, honesty and patriotism would overcome the forces of decay. They knew that these evils had to be uprooted before a better life could begin. A young, vigorous and healthy force was needed. This force the Army supplied.

After taking stock of the factors which would contribute to the success or failure of the revolution, Gamal Abdul Nasser took up the reins. The forward movement, which had begun on May

8th, 1945—VE Day, as the Allies called it—was now definitely under way.

We had fought against enemies within and without, and in spite of many difficulties and disappointments, we had succeeded in giving a demoralized and divided nation some sense of its own dignity and future.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE OLD REGIME was tottering dangerously, but it was not easy to overthrow. A revolution is not something which can be improvised at a month's notice. Yet we had to act, for no secret society can keep a grip on its members during a long period of enervating inactivity. Too many setbacks and too long a delay will make the strongest elements fade away. We were caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. The hour was not yet ripe for action, but we could not risk waiting much longer.

Gamal Abdul Nasser is not the man to be led astray by dreams, and he keeps a firm check on his impulses. In a given situation, he never tackles a problem without first examining all the circumstances. He never takes a step without a

thorough knowledge of the ground he must cover. In the darkest hour, when his cause seems doomed to failure, he redoubles his efforts. At a time when the future of a nation was at stake, circumspection was of the utmost importance. And Gamal, faithful to his theory of gradual infiltration, refused to rush things. There is only one way to guard against the dangers of improvised action, and that is to know exactly what one wants. The choice was between revolution and a revolt.

Gamal instituted a revolutionary administrative system, which he divided into five sections: economic affairs, combat personnel, security, terrorism, and propaganda.

Each one of these cogs had a precise function in the revolutionary machine. The efficiency of the system was proved by the fact that it enabled us to

move smoothly forward to the *coup d'etat* of July 23rd, 1952.

To be honest, the names given to these sections were rather ambitious. "Economic affairs," for example, might suggest that the purpose of this section was to study economic problems, or to map out the financial policy which would be applied after the *coup d'etat.*

In fact, this committee was formed to watch over the humble necessities of life. One of its functions was to pay allowances to the dependants of those of our soldiers who were unable to fulfill their family responsibilities because of their patriotic dedication to our cause. This section was in charge of the Society's treasury, the financing of secret networks, and the purchase of arms and equipment.

Each of us contributed to the funds by paying in the equivalent of two months' salary, in the form of a loan. We all did this with good will—or rather, all save myself. As I was a married man with a family, and had no resources other than my modest captain's pay, I was not in a position to make any contribution. I was granted a special dispensation by the committee of the section. The committee had the right to requisition any sums required for the purchase of armaments. Thus, when General Aziz EL Masri sold the harvest of mangoes from his orchard, the committee requisitioned the proceeds.

The funds which were collected enabled us to establish a small clandestine factory for the manufacture of revolvers and Molotov cocktails. For these we needed a huge quantity of bottles, and we managed to obtain some tens of thousands from a

wholesaler in the rue Clot-Bey. Soon the factory became a real arsenal.

The purpose of the Combat Personnel committee was to recruit members from the various branches of the Army. The committee supervised the formation of combat groups from the Army, and also of Para-military groups among civilians. Recruits where subjected to a rigorous examination before being assigned to an appropriate cell. In each cell, an officer from each branch

of the Army maintained liaison between the section and the unit in which he served. A group of twenty cells constituted a section.

The committee of Combat Personnel kept track of the numbers of recruits and deserters, and kept the leaders of the Society informed as to our strength.

Only Gamal Abdul Nasser and Abdul Hakim Amer, however, knew the exact number and the names of all our members.

Finally, this committee also supervised the training of certain picked personnel, the best of whom were selected for the Security Committee.

Among our adherents outside the Army were the Young Nationalists, led by Abdul Aziz Aly, one of the heroes of the Revolution of 1919. He placed his secret shock troops at our disposal, and his active collaboration was of great value to us.

Admission to the Security Committee was a reward for loyal service. As its name suggests, this committee supervised recruits, making sure of the

orthodoxy of their revolutionary beliefs. It also enforced strict observation of the Society's rules. Another of its functions was the frequent changing of passwords and meeting places. It was responsible for law and order, and controlled admission or expulsion. The terms of admission were extremely strict. Any infringement of discipline was immediately punished, the penalties ranging from a simple warning to total expulsion from the Society. The committee's powers were wide, but it was not authorized to make any important decision without the sanction of the Supreme Committee, which was both the executive authority and the brains of the movement.

Our Terrorist Section was largely theoretical. Terrorism has long been used as a political instrument, and the history of revolutions, particularly in the nineteenth century in Europe and elsewhere,

abounds in examples of celebrated political assassinations and crimes. Acts of this sort—spectacular gestures designed to capture the imagination of the masses—were contrary to our principles. We did not believe in the isolated gesture, the action of a lone man, and we were determined to avoid the excesses of political fanaticism, which we ourselves had witnessed.

The glorification of violence is fatal to the hot - blooded people of the East, because it unleashes their most animal instincts: the result is a series of hideous crimes committed in the name of an ideal. In Egypt we saw the depths of degeneration to which it dragged the Muslim Brotherhood.

It is quite easy to satisfy youth's thirst for romance, and to harness its enthusiasm to a cause,

without encouraging violence. In his essay on "The Philosophy of the Revolution," Gamal Abdul Nasser relates that

when he was a very young man he took part in an attempt to assassinate a politician who was guilty of treason. He describes how he was haunted by remorse all that night, and how peace only came when he read on the following morning that the man had not been touched by the bullets.

This does not mean that there were no terrorists at this time. There were terrorists in the Army. Captain Moustapha Kamel Sedky, an ex-officer of the Intelligence Department, had formed a terrorist group of twenty-three officers and senior noncommissioned officers, which was extremely active.

The assassination of Lieutenant-General Ibrahim Atallah was the signal for a series of political crimes in Egypt. It was followed by the murder of Amin Osman Pasha, a die-hard Anglophile and ex-Finance Minister of Nahas Pasha's Wafd government. The murder, which created a sensation at the time, was intended as a warning to Egyptian quislings. The conspirators had sworn to keep silence, no matter what happened. One of them, Hussein Tewfik, was captured and tortured. He confessed, not through cowardice, but in order to save a woman's name. He denounced the terrorist group, and revealed their meeting places and the names of all the members known to him. I was not surprised to learn that my name had been mentioned, although I had never been connected in any way with the organization. I was arrested, and spent two and half of the most terrible years of my life in prison. Finally, however, my innocence was proved, and I was released.

We disapproved of these assassinations, not because we felt the slightest sympathy for the victims, who were of little importance, but because we did not wish to associate ourselves in any way with a group which was more concerned with personal glory than anything else.

Our Society was responsible for one "outrage," which provoked laughter rather than tears. One Friday, Nahas Pasha had gone to the A1 Rifai mosque. Having completed his devotions, he was preparing to enter his car when a young Coastguard lieutenant, named Abou Chabana, threw a shoe at him. Missing the Prime Minister, it struck Abdul Hamid Abdul Hakk, the Wakf (trust administration) minister, in the face. Everybody stampeded, under the impression that the somewhat unusual missile was a bomb. The most ridiculous part of the story is

that the young practical joker was court martialled, by order of General Hamid Seif EL Nasr. Naturally he was found guilty of a crime he had never thought of committing: assassinating Nashas Pasha with a shoe! This is the only political crime on our conscience.

Finally, the Committee of Propaganda was very important. Propaganda is one of the most potent weapons of our time. It was not possible for us to spread propaganda by means of the press, radio or broadside, as we had to operate in secrecy. We had to rely on word of mouth.

As our power increased, we were able to come more and more into the open, and soon almost everybody in the Army knew of our intentions. As the movement was a military one, the public was

not so well informed as the Army. To remedy this, we decided that each of us must go out into the streets, into cafes, trams and mosques, to meet people and to talk politics. Only in this way could we arouse the resentment of the people against the British and their puppets.

In 1940 we exploited the surrender of France and the isolation of England to drive another nail into the imperialist coffin. We used the incident at Mersa Matruh, and the British *coup* of February 4th, to provoke popular feeling in favor of revolution.

There was no need to stuff people's heads with lies and nonsense. The facts spoke for themselves. If we erred in any way, it was not by excess of demagogy: we told the people that they must have their rights, but also that they must fulfill their

duties. We did not claim to be able to work miracles. We did not promise that the Revolution would give every Egyptian a car, a refrigerator and a weekend cottage in the country.

Chapter nine

AFTER THE WAR, Egypt became a member of the Arab League, and also of the United Nations Organization. This double promotion in international affairs was important for Egypt's future.

Her political horizon now covered the entire Arab world, from the Persian Gulf to the Atlantic coast, and from the Indian Ocean to the plateaus *of* central Asia. But intelligent Egyptians realized that our country was at a standstill. We had neither the political power nor the physical means to play an active role in international affairs. Only a revolution would enable Egypt to assume its place as leader of the Arab world.

The Arab League was formed, on Egypt's initiative, on March 22nd, 1945. Its object was not only to foster closer cultural, political and economic ties between member states, but also to free those Arab states which were still under foreign domination. At first, suspicion was aroused by the fact that the League had been supported by the British, and had been formed on the initiative of Nahas Pasha and Nouri Es Said, the Prime Minister of Iraq—both of whom had been put in power by Churchill tanks at almost the same moment, and in identical circumstances. Patriots saw the new League as a Wafd-Hachemite combine, engineered by the British Foreign Office.

Nahas Pasha conceived the League as a politicians' club—an association of nationalist parties whose aim was to achieve Arab unity and independence by fomenting agitation.

After Nahas' fall from power, Farouk tried to turn it into a kind of Holy Alliance, in the hope of steadying his tottering throne. In March, 1946, he invited the Arab sovereigns and heads of state to the Inchass Conference, while the political leaders met at Cairo. There was now no question of unity. Farouk was merely concerned with preserving the status quo.

When Nahas had failed to make the Arab League a Wafd party platform, and Farouk had failed to make it an instrument for reactionary despotism, it ceased to serve any specific purpose, and gradually became a tribune from which the voice of the Arabs made itself heard in the outside world.

Far from being the vehicle for British interests dreamed of by Anthony Eden when he supported it in the House of Commons early in 1943, the League became an organization devoted to the struggle against imperialism in the Middle East. Despite the intrigues, personal ambitions and rivalries, a compact and vigorous institution was built up which the world would have to contend with in international affairs.

From May, 1945, until July, 1952, Egypt lived under a regime of terror, in which freedom of the press, speech and public assembly were rigidly curtailed. This pre-revolutionary period was one of the most unhappy in Egypt's history. We were isolated in international affairs, unpopular abroad, and torn by anarchy at home. A terrible epidemic of cholera swept the country.

Two equally dangerous forces arose to take advantage of Egypt's weakness at this time: Communism, and the Muslim Brotherhood, During the war, and in the years immediately following, a wave of revolution broke on the world, sometimes under the banner of Nationalism, sometimes under the banner of Communism, but always aiming at greater social justice.

It is in countries where social unrest and resentment may be exploited that Communism gains a hold. The Middle East; as long as it remained under the imperialist yoke, took the line of least resistance to Communism. In Egypt, at this time, we were witnessing the birth of a new fanaticism—Communism—and the revival of the old fanaticism of the Muslim Brotherhood.

At first taking parallel courses, the two creeds finally converged and united.

The passive role played by the Egyptians during the war had left untapped a source of militant energy and enthusiasm. The only nationalist party— the Wafd— had no attraction for the younger generation, being, at bottom, reactionary. The Brotherhood, therefore, absorbed these dynamic and explosive forces.

The Muslim Brotherhood made many overtures of alliance to the Army at this time. Our feeling was that the Brotherhood was a powerful group, and the only one with which we could safely cooperate in the difficult years which lay ahead. It was vital that we should strengthen our position by such alliances. Gamal agreed that cooperation would be valuable, but refused to countenance any merger with the Brotherhood, for this would inevitably result in our being swallowed up by it.

I myself believed that great things would come of our combined efforts, but our mentor, General Aziz EL Masri, was more cautious.

"Join the Muslim Brotherhood if you like," he told us. "But beware—they are a sect of fanatics." He understood the nihilism which lay hidden beneath the mystic ideas of the Brotherhood, and which was to break out in the form of terrorism and violence.

It is now no secret that many of our officers sympathized with the Brotherhood. The link between the two groups was now Abdul Moneim Abdul Raouf, who had replaced me. Candidates for the Brotherhood, after passing certain preliminary tests, were sent to major Mahmoud Labib, who was responsible for their initiation.

The initiation ceremony was designed to create a powerful atmosphere of mystery.

The candidate was ordered to proceed, by night, to the Saliba district. On arrival, he was guided through a maze of dark, narrow streets to a house where he was received by the officiating members, and taken to a dimly lit room on the first floor One of the officiates, almost invisible in the dark shadows, then invited him to sit at a table upon which were placed a Koran and a revolver. Placing one hand on the Koran, the other on the revolver, the candidate had to repeat, word for word, the oath of loyalty, obedience and secrecy. The oath bound him as a member of the Brotherhood, and he was henceforward an instrument in the hands of his superior. When this ceremony was over, the officiants left him alone in the room for a few

moments, to meditate. Then, fully initiated, he was guided out of the district.

The cooperation between our organization and the Brotherhood was at best a makeshift affair; soon there

were frequent clashes and misunderstandings. The Brotherhood made mistakes in handling some of our officers. No distinction was made between soldiers and civilians, so that, during training, Army officers might find themselves being given a course of instruction in the use of the rifle by a civilian. This state of affairs was not much to the liking of our officers, for the soldier instinctively dislikes receiving orders from anyone but his own superiors.

Moreover, they found that the Brotherhood had no consistent or intelligent plan of campaign. Even

the highest officials seemed to be ignorant of its real aims. Sometimes the officers asked: "What do you expect of us?" "Your complete faith in the Supreme Guide, and your readiness to do what he asks, when he asks it," was the reply. There was a vague notion that 'something was going to be done,' and that was all.

Thus the union between the Army and the Muslim Brotherhood was far from ideal, but as the Brotherhood had not yet thrown aside the mask and set out on its career of terrorism and murder, to have broken with it at this crucial moment in our preparations would have been a grave tactical error.

In August, 1945, the Prime Minister, Nokrachy Pasha, announced his intention of negotiating a treaty with England which would result in the

withdrawal of foreign troops, and the incorporation of Sudan with Egypt. In November, the King announced that negotiations had already begun.

The tone of the official announcements could not hide the fact that public opinion, inflamed by the newly liberated press and the eloquence of the Muslim Brotherhood, was growing extremely impatient. It was obvious that unrest would sweep through the whole country unless Nokrachy Pasha could obtain concessions from the British which would satisfy the nationalist mood of the people. But the British, with incredible lack of foresight, showed no sign of making any conciliatory gesture. The British troops in Cairo seemed to have taken root there, while all the best houses had been requisitioned for the Middle East Headquarters, which seemed very disinclined to clear out. Public

opinion was roused, and there were riots, bloodshed and attacks on British soldiers.

In December, 1945, the Nokrachy government returned to the attack, addressing an official note to London which demanded the revision and readjustment of relations between the two countries. It warned the British Foreign Office that the continued presence of imperialist troops would be regarded by every Egyptian as an insult to their national pride.

It was useless. The Foreign Office answered evasively, in order to gain time.

These delaying tactics angered the people, and once again rioting and violence broke out. Three ministers were dismissed from office and the government itself eventually fell.

There were only two alternatives left to the King in this crisis: to recall the Wafd, or to entrust the government to an independent of sufficient character to face up to the situation. Farouk chose Ismail Sedky, an independent. It was the least offensive choice.

The new government, composed of liberals and independents, received the support of Parliament, but its political complexion was not of the type to appease the growing discontent of the people. On March 7th, 1946, three weeks after it came to power, the government announced that negotiations had been opened with the British Foreign Office. The people were not satisfied, and rose in revolt. There were riots and barricades in the streets, and, as always, there were deaths. A pitched battle took place on the Gizeh Bridge, where twenty students were mowed down by machine guns.

These waves of violence had a salutary effect on the British. The Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, decided to withdraw all troops from Cairo and Alexandria. The Ambassador to Egypt, Lord Killearn—now hated by all Egyptians—was recalled to London. On July 4th, 1946, the Citadel of Cairo was handed over to the Egyptian Army. On July 30th, it was announced that the middle East Headquarters would be withdrawn from Cairo to the Canal Zone before the end of the year, and that all troops stationed in Egypt would be transferred to the Canal Zone before May 1st, 1947.

We should have followed up our advantage immediately. Instead, Ismail Sedky preferred to embark on the usual interminable discussions with Britain, and to conclude a pact with the Muslim brotherhood, so as to avoid having to tackle the

problem of terrorism. Our organization considered that the Brotherhood had betrayed the revolutionary ideal by this pact, and we broke off with them temporarily.

In the meantime, Britain was still pulling strings and playing for time. Ismail Sedky left for London, where he met the Foreign minister, Mr. Bevin. He brought back with him the draft of a treaty, which was "torpedoed" on December 7th by an unfortunate statement by the governor-General of the Sudan. On the following day, Sedky fell from power.

He was succeeded by Nokrachy Pasha. On January 27th, 1947, the new Prime Minister broke off negotiations with London. In July, he sent a strong memorandum to the United Nations Security

Council, demanding the immediate and total withdrawal of British troops from Egypt, and the termination of colonial rule in the Sudan. At Lake Success, Nokrachy himself brilliantly defended the Egyptian claims. Egypt's position was very strong, both from the moral and the legal standpoint.

It was at this solemn moment that Nahas Pasha chose to send the Security Council his celebrated telegram, in which he claimed that Nokrachy did not represent Egypt, and that the Wafd did not consider itself bound by any decision which the Council might take. This ill-timed intervention is probably without precedent in the history of diplomacy. The whole of Egypt was stunned. This incident proves—if such proof were needed—how principle was always subordinated to personal ambition and party faction in the old regime.

By February, 1947, the situation had become very threatening. On February 24th, the British Ambassador in Washington informed the State Department that his government had decided to withdraw all British troops from Greece and Turkey. Imperialism was tottering on the edge of an abyss. The withdrawal of British troops from the Eastern Mediterranean, coinciding as it did with the climax of the Palestine crisis and the rioting in Egypt, left the Middle East dangerously open to a Russian advance. The Middle East became the weak link in the international strategy of the Western powers.

In taking a step so humiliating to her self-esteem, England was trying desperately to concentrate her forces on the military base of the Suez Canal. She was not to keep it for long.

While these events were taking place on the political stage, we, the revolutionaries, were gathering in the wings.

Our Society now numbered more than one thousand officers. Destiny thrust a few of them into the limelight, others remained in the background. Some became members of the Revolutionary Council, the others carried out their more obscure tasks with ardor and loyalty. Our solidarity was such that not a single member of the organization proved a traitor or a defeatist between now and the *coup; d'etat* of July, 1952.

We met regularly to take stock of the changing situation, for one of our principles was that we should adapt ourselves to circumstances, and not be bound by preconceived ideas. The meetings

were generally held in the home of one or other of our members. Always present were Abdul Hakim Amer, Abdul Meguid Fouad, Talaat Khairi, Abdul Moneim Abdul Raouf, and many others.

It goes without saying that we did not manage to enlist every officer in the Army. There were certain vacillating elements who could neither help nor hinder us. The militant groups, such as the one formed by Moustapha Sedky, were too vague in purpose to be of use to us. And there were, of course, the opportunists, who were more concerned with their own careers than with the revolution.

Our immediate aim was to organize opposition to the government. Our ultimate goal was the overthrow of the monarchy and the setting up of a

democratic republic. The success of these two plans presupposed the complete cooperation of the Army: we had to be certain that the officer corps was politically awakened.

Our Executive Committee therefore decided to abandon secrecy, and to turn to open propaganda. The movement was now too strong to be kept within the limits of a secret organization. Clandestine at the beginning, the movement now came out into the open, only to go underground again for the final preparations.

Members were encouraged to infiltrate every branch of the Army to find new recruits. We organized lectures and public debates for the discussion of current problems. These meetings attracted a large number of young people anxious

to learn and to make their own ideas known. Previously, the Army officer's life had been a daily routine of mathematics, military history, ballistics, theory of strategy, field exercises. The study of social reform gave their lives new meaning.

We broke with the Muslim Brotherhood, for it had denied its own ideals by compacting with a government which oppressed the people. Finally, we sent a representative to the King's chief adviser, Ahmed Hassanein, informing him of the Army's grave disquiet at the deplorable mismanagement of the affairs of the State.

The Revolution gave its enemies every chance!

The senior ranks of the Army, who still adhered blindly to the King, were disturbed by the unrest among the junior officers. The government thought we could be bought off by filling our pockets, and there was an unexpected wave of promotion. This went on right up to July 25th, 1952 two days after the *coup d'etat*—when Farouk bestowed the Field Marshal's baton upon Gencral Neguib. The King's motive was too obvious, and the baton was refused. It was always said that the last King of Egypt would remain unscrupulous to the bitter end.

Chapter ten

DURTNG 1948, the crisis in the Middle East maintained a state of tension between the Zionists and the Arabs, who were now condemned to long years of exhausting struggle to achieve their aim—the liberation of Palestine! This portion of history does not lie within the scope of my book, and I shall content myself with noting certain psychological factors.

The Palestine question is quite simply the legacy of the widespread domination of the Middle East by Western powers which began at the end of the nineteenth century, and which has only just now come to an end. The creation of a State of Israel was a strategic move by the West, designed to weaken the Arab world.

Exhausted by two world wars, the Western powers realized that they were powerless to maintain their position by force, and evolved another means to attain their ends: namely, to place the industrial power and energy of Israel at the service of imperialism It was imperialism's last fling. History shows that great powers are at their most dangerous, from the victim's point of view, when they are on the point of disintegration. The Roman Empire took four hundred years to break up, and its last convulsions were as chaotic as those we now witnessed.

The British Empire reached its zenith with the cutting of the Suez Canal. It was to emerge victorious from the Second World War, only to start crumbling away. History is nothing but a constant humbling of arrogance.

The imperialist economy of the United States came to the assistance of European imperialism in Palestine, by investing an enormous capital sum in the country. American ambition had been roused by the war, and the State Department dreamed of forcing its authority on the Islamic world, from the Caucasus to the Indian Ocean. They set up the State of Israel in the hope of gaining a foothold in the Middle East, astride one of the world s trade routes, where they could keep an eye on the Russian colossus.

The discovery of the world's richest petroleum deposits on the Arabian peninsula exerted an irresistible attraction for the Americans. It might well be asked whether this understandable eagerness would not have been better served had they adopted a more conciliatory attitude to the

adjacent Arab states, instead of antagonizing them by supporting Israel. Apparently Anglo-Saxon logic is very different from Arab logic.

In 1948, hostilities began in Palestine, and the Jewish terrorist organizations went into action. The Irgun Zwei Leumi, the Stern gang and the Haganah— the self-styled "Jewish Resistance Movement"—inaugurated a widespread reign of terror. One after another, Arab towns and villages were razed. The defenseless Arabs were massacred, or driven from their homes. The British mandate did not allow the inhabitants to take up arms, and the attacks by Jewish terrorists took place well before the mandate ended. The terrorists aimed, of course, at putting an end to both the mandate and the Arab people. In the circumstances we could not stand by with our arms folded.

There can be no one in Egypt who does not remember the feeling of horror aroused by these savage Zionist attacks, and how the young men talked of a Holy \\'ar to defend this hallowed part of the Muslim world. As the mandate had not yet expired, our intervention could not be an official one. But the government allowed the dispatch of volunteers. Among the most enthusiastic were the Muslim Brothers.

The leaders of the volunteer forces and representatives of our movement met at Hassan EL Banna's home. Among those present were Gamal Abdul Nasser, then at the Staff School, Kamal Eddin Hussein, an artillery captain, and many other officers who were attached to the Brotherhood. At the same time, our movement established contact with Hag Amin EL Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Palestine, and Abdul Rahman Azzam, the Secretary

of the Arab League, in order to arrange the training and equipping of volunteers.

Early in May, 1948, Great Britain announced her decision to abandon her mandate in Palestine. On the fifteenth of the same month, this announcement was followed by a warning that the British government would not permit an international police force, or any United Nations organization, to be set up in Palestine before the withdrawal of all British troops in the area had been completed. This was tantamount to an invitation to both Jews and Arabs to settle their disputes by bloodshed. The departure of the British, and the absence of any official control, would make Palestine an open battlefield.

The terms of the mandate made it quite clear that the mandatory power was responsible for the maintenance of law and order until a proper authority was set up in the country. Instead of fulfilling her international obligations by referring the matter to the United Nations, England had provoked war. She was, of course, only too willing to set the Arabs on the Jews, believing that this would be to her advantage.

On May 15th, tension was near breaking point. Even before the mandate had expired, the Jews had already seized the larger towns—Tel Aviv, Haifa, Jaffa and Jerusalem—as well as the coastal plains and the hills of Galilee. To liberate Palestine, we had to drive the Jews from all these points.

When he gave the order for the Egyptian forces to cross the northern border, Nokrachy Pasha seemed to be under the impression that the whole

affair would be a military picnic. It was far from that. On the same day, Nokrachy sent a note to the great powers, stating that Egypt had no territorial ambitions, and was intervening in Palestine merely to assist its people to restore law and order.

Unless he left the Army, no Egyptian soldier could take part in the struggle, as a state of war did not exist between Egypt and Israel. A number of officers chose this course, and the Chief-of-Staff, Ferik (Field Marshal) Osman EL Mahdi, granted their requests for release.

The military authorities had divided Palestine into four zones, each under a separate command responsible to the Supreme Military Council at Damascus. Egypt was represented on this council by General Saleh Harb. The southern zone assigned

to Egypt was under the command of Lewa (General) Soliman Abdul Mahed Sobol, a senior officer of whom we thought very highly. The troops levied by the mufti of Palestine and the Arab League were placed under his command. The Egyptian volunteers were commanded by General Ahmed Abdul Aziz, who was later killed in Palestine. The only authorized equipment was the rifle, and when the government finally agreed to allow the volunteers a few cannon, the news was received as a great triumph.

The main plan of the Arab armies was a pincer movement, with the Egyptian Army moving from the south, along the coastal plain towards Tel Aviv, and the Transjordan Arab Legion from the east. The Syrian and Lebanese detachments were to create diversions by attacking the villages on their frontiers which were occupied by Zionists. The Arab forces

came within seven kilometers of Tel Aviv. The first truce enabled the Israelis to bring Up reinforcements and reorganize their forces. The cooperation of Jewish organizations throughout the world gave new heart to the Israelis, and they managed to stem the Arab advance. The designs of the imperialists, and—it may as well be admitted—treachery among the Arab forces, did the rest.

After the battle of Natroum, king Abdulla of Jordan abandoned his allies, and devoted his attention to sharing what remained of Palestine with the Israelis. This betrayal enabled the Zionists to occupy Galilee and the Negev, forcing the Egyptians into a narrow coastal strip between the Gaza and the northeast frontier.

The Egyptian forces entered the fight in great haste and confusion, without adequate equipment, and with almost no preparation. They were given no reliable information as to the enemy's strength, with the result that they were taken completely by surprise by the Jewish superiority in equipment and numbers. our transport and medical services were poor, the food was terrible, heavy arms almost nonexistent. The only thing not in short supply was defective equipment such as the hand grenades which exploded in the hands of the throwers. Surprise was followed by deep indignation at the criminal inadequacy of the preparations, and disgust with the men who had betrayed the Army into such a situation. The volunteers swore that on their return to Egypt, things would change. The Palestine war was also a cause of the Egyptian revolution.

All I need add is that operations were directed from Cairo, and that there were seven different Arab commands located in seven different places. Sometimes farce crept into the tragedy, as when the Engineer Corps was instructed to build a villa at Gaza for Farouk.

The Palestine affair rocked the whole Arab world. Jewish influence was strong enough to persuade President Truman to declare himself the champion of Jewish claims in Palestine, and to recognize the State of Israel five minutes after its birth.

Whenever I think back on this unhappy time, I am reminded of my own ill fortune. For, at a time when all my comrades were in action, I was in prison, and unable to join them. Fate has sent me many trials, but I, who have never been able. to live or act in isolation, found this detention the most painful experience of my life. During the Palestinian

campaign, Gamal Abdul Nasser, leading a counterattack of one hundred and fifty men, distinguished himself by relieving the Egyptian garrison at Falouga besieged by the Israelis.

After the Palestine campaign, Egypt moved rapidly towards revolution. The humiliation, frustration and anger aroused by the incompetence of the men who had led Egypt to defeat instead of victory, provoked a passionate desire to overthrow a regime which had once again demonstrated its complete impotence. The discontent of the masses was utilized by the Muslim Brotherhood, which grew enormously in power. It is possible that by 1948 Communism had infiltrated the Brotherhood, which had gathered around it a bitter and discontented mob. At all events, this politico-religious society was no\v dedicated to terrorism and violence.

The Muslim Brothers had to their credit the assassination of Ahmed Maher, Amin Osman, and Selim Zaki, the Cairo Chief-of-Police, as well as several attempts against Nahas Pasha's life. Still the authorities hesitated to outlaw them—it was not an easy thing to do, as they had been the first to volunteer to fight in the Holy Land, and had been widely acclaimed for their patriotism and bravery. If the government had tried to deal severely with them, it would have been accused of persecuting patriots, and of being hand in glove with foreign powers. But the menace of the Brotherhood became so grave that public opinion began to turn against them, and Nokrachy Pasha felt that he could take action without being accused of lack of patriotism.

On December 25th, 1948, he ordered the dissolution of the Brotherhood. Three days later, he was assassinated by a terrorist disguised as a

police officer. Public opinion was outraged by this murder, for Nokrachy was probably the most honorable politician of the old regime. The cry went up for rigorous suppression of the Brotherhood.

Ibrahim Abdul Hadi, chief adviser to the King, succeeded Nokrachy as Prime minister, and took firm action against the terrorists. Frequent arrests broke their ranks, and after six months the country was able to breathe again. In March, 1949, Sheikh Hassan EL Banna, an upright and honorable marl, who I believe disapproved of the excesses committed by the Brothers, was assassinated by the Secret Poliee. He was succeeded by Hassan EL Hodeiby, a singularly dull-witted and colorless ex-magistrate.

This was not to be the end of the Brotherhood's activities. The Revolutionary Council's first action after the *coup d'etat* was to pardon the Brotherhood, believing that its members had sufficiently expiated their crimes. This generosity was ill-rewarded, for the Brothers whom we had rehabilitated and given a fresh chance in life, turned against us savagely. The attempted assassination of President Nasser on October 28th, 1954, was to have been the signal for the massacre of the entire Revolutionary Council, and of one hundred and sixteen officers.

Martial law, which had been proclaimed on May 15th, 1948, at the outbreak of hostilities, was still in force. Freedom of the individual was restricted, meetings prohibited. The Prime Minister, Abdul Hadi, had set up a dictatorship, under the pretext of suppressing terrorism. When he had dealt with the

Muslim Brotherhood, he turned his attention to our movement. He issued a warrant for the arrest of Gamal Abdul Nasser, and for the search of his house.

Ferik Osman EL Mahdi, with a posse of military police, descended on Gamal's home. A thorough search revealed only a few bullets. As there were not sufficient grounds for his arrest, he was sent for by the Prime Minister, who accused him of being a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, and of supervising their military training. This was, of course, untrue. Usually very much in control of his feelings, Gamal lost his temper with Abdul Hadi, and there ~vas a stormy interview. This seemed to impress the Prime 5Tinister, for Gamal was not further molested.

When the danger had passed, we set to work again. At the beginning of 1949, the Army lead just

returned from Palestine, where our movement had lost a large number of its most valuable adherents. We decided to reorganize. Control was delegated to an Executive Committee composed of ten members. Gamal Abdul Nasser, Kamal Eddin Hussein, Abdul Hakim Amer, Hassan Ibrahim, Abdul Moneim Abdul Raouf, Salah Salem, Gamal Salem, Abdul Latif Boghdadi, Khaled Mohieddin and myself. This Committee was later to be the Revolutionary Council.

In 1950. Gamal was elected president of the Executive Committee. He was 29 years old, and held the rank of Major. He was re-elected in 1951, and remained president until the *coup d'etat.*

We called ourselves "Free Officers," and the name soon became familiar to the public, for it was

with these words that we signed our pamphlets. Our organization became known as the Society of Free Officers.

We had improved the vertical structure of our organization, to prepare for direct action.

A cell was composed of five members, each of whom formed a fresh cell whose members remained unknown to the other members of the parent cell, thereby limiting, for security purposes, the individual's knowledge of the whole organization. Each member was required to make monthly payments into a savings account, to build up an emergency fund.

The officer in charge of each section was now empowered to authorize expulsions and the admission of new members, reporting such cases to his superiors.

The first action of our newly organized Society was the issue of our celebrated manifesto, in which we pledged ourselves to put an end to foreign occupation, to form a strong, modern army, and to establish a democratic parliamentary system.

Such a program was unlikely to appeal to the British and their Egyptian puppets. The Secret Police strained every nerve to discover at least one link in the chain. They never found a weak link, although many traps were laid for us. Captain Moustapha Kamal Sedky, for example, suggested to Gamal the fusion of his group with ours. He believed that our aims were Utopian, and that it was better to try to gain the King's confidence and set

him on the right path. This was manifestly absurd, for the root of the trouble lay with the King, and the compromise suggested would have meant a betrayal of our revolutionary ideals.

Gamal pretended to be taken aback by Sedky's proposal. He took great pains to persuade the Captain that he was not the leader of a secret society, and was therefore not interested in his proposition. Gamal then instructed one of our most trusted officers to join Sedky's deviationist group, to keep an eye on their movements, and keep our Committee informed.

By this means we learned that the group which had planned to convert the King had soon been converted by him, and that it had become his Iron Guard. Farouk very cleverly pretended to espouse their cause, corrupting them with gifts and favors—notably, orgiastic evenings with champagne, caviar and pretty women. The Sedky group yielded to such

persuasive arguments, and became one of the chief instruments of the King's intrigues. They committed many murders at the instigation of the Palace secret police.

One of these was the "execution" of an old politician, whose only crime was that he had protested against the current scandalous abuses. Our agent was one of the men appointed as executioners, and he immediately reported to us. We told him to continue acting his part, but to fire to miss. The unfortunate victim was riddled with bullets, but somehow managed to survive. He is still alive today!

The Society of Free Officers had to contend with two opponents: the Palace, and the Army High Command Salah Salem obtained the confidence of Ferik Heydar Pasha, Chief of Staff of the Army, while I did the same with Dr. Youssef Rachad, the

King's confidant and *eminence grise.* we got secret information from both of them.

Once Heydar thought he had trapped the Free Officers when a palace informer caught one of our men, Lieutenant Hassan Allam, writing a revolutionary pamphlet. He was sent before a board of enquiry, and we were forced to abandon him to his fate, so as to safeguard the future of the Society of Free Officers.

Chapter Eleven

THE SUPPRESSION of the Muslim Brotherhood had freed Egypt from terrorism, but had not removed the causes of social unrest. Return to normal life brought conditions in which reform might have at least delayed, if not prevented, the fall of the old regime. But this last chance was thrown away.

'The year 1949 was a year of depression and weariness, in which the only signs of life were the secret activities. Egypt was at a Low ebb, but destiny was knocking at the door.

Farouk was in a difficult situation, for he realized that he could not continue to rule without the support of a popular party. In spite of his strong dislike of Nahas Pasha, and the certainty that an election would mean a crushing majority for the Wafd, Farouk resolved to go to the country. In July,

Hussein Sirry succeeded Abdul Hadi, and formed a coalition government with the Wafd, to prepare for the general election. The government was unable to reach agreement about the division of the country into electoral districts, and in December Sirry was forced to resign in order to form a neutral cabinet composed of independents.

It was a sign of the times that the Wafd election campaign stressed the social question, promising economic reforms, a reduction in the cost of living, a curtailment of state expenditure and waste, and other promises which were never kept.

The election took place in January, 1955, and more than two-thirds of the seats went to the Wafd. Nahas Pasha formed a cabinet composed entirely of Wafdists, and the classic duel between the King and the Wafd began again. The political pendulum, regulated during the thirty years from 1922-52 by Britain, began to swing between these two

extremities—the King and Nahas Pasha. Britain played off one against the other for her own ends. Constantly opposing each other, the King and the Wafd led their country to ruin, because they placed their own interests above those of Egypt. In the meantime, economic conditions deteriorated. The industrial output, which had been stimulated during the war by the needs of the Allied forces, dropped, while the price of food continued to rise. In five years the cost of living index had risen by 400%, while wages had only doubled. Without an adequate system of direct taxation, the authorities were powerless to halt inflation Increased import duties and indirect taxes made life even more difficult for the people.'

The Wafd tried to offer some justification for its conduct by saying that its negotiations with the British Foreign Office were proving fruitful. These talks, however, simply went on and on, getting

nowhere. The situation became so grave, that Nahas was forced to try to distract popular discontent by creating a patriotic diversion.

On October 6th, 1951, Parliament was summoned to an extraordinary session, and in the course of a memorable sitting voted the repeal of the Treaty of August 26th, 1936, and of the agreements of July 19th, 1899, relating to the Sudan.

A few days later, the French, British and Turkish governments offered to conclude a four-power pact with Egypt under which the British occupation forces would be withdrawn from the Canal Zone, and replaced by an international force drawn from the four signatory powers. The offer was rejected, because its only result would have been a domination by four powers instead of one. Every British Prime Minister seems to imagine that he is another Disraeli.

The judicial and fiscal immunity which had been granted to the occupying troops was withdrawn, and the Egyptian government resorted to force. Guerrilla warfare broke out. The Egyptian Army could not intervene, as no state of war existed between Britain and Egypt. It was the "Phalanxes of the Liberation," a picked body of young students and Muslim Brothers, who took up arms against the British. They were organized in small, highly mobile units, which harried the enemy in a merciless guerrilla war.

They blew up bridges and military depots, attacked enemy camps, shot up convoys, destroyed pipelines. At the same time, the workers deserted the Suez factories, and brought them to a standstill. Reinforcements flowed in from overseas, and soon the British had more than 80,000 troops in the Zone, not counting the non European auxiliaries. While these struggles went on, resentment against the

occupying forces increased. British civilians who had remained in the service of the State—a few teachers and technicians—were expelled. English goods were boycotted. It was a determined fight.

When the struggle was at its height, Farouk recalled Abdul Fattah Amr, his ambassador in England, and appointed him as a political adviser. At the same time he appointed Hafez Afifi, governor of the Misr Bank, his Chief Adviser. Both choices were unfortunate. The former was a confirmed Anglophile, the latter a fervent supporter of capitalism. The two appointments could only be interpreted as a challenge to the patriots who were giving their lives for their country, and as an insult to the misery of the people. Farouk seemed to be proclaiming: "Look! I believe in imperialism and high finance!" Such was the stupidity and blindness of the King.

The ardent patriotism and resolution with which the government conducted the struggle raised the Wafd in the esteem of the Free Officers. We decided to support the government, and blow the spark of revolution which the Wafd had kindled. The Executive Committee instructed Kaimakam Rachad Mehanna—who was to be a Regent after Farouk's abdication—to see how the land lay, by approaching Fouad Serag Eddin, the General Secretary of the Wafd party, who luckily happened to be related to him. Mehanna was so unwilling to undertake the mission that we substituted Colonel Ahmed Anouar, now Chief of Military Police. We thought that Mehanna's indecision arose from his strange and shifty character, but it never crossed our minds that he was deserting us.

Early in December, Ahmed Anouar was received by Serag Eddin in his magnificent house at Garden City. He told the minister that the Army would back

the government when it had deposed the King, or at least put an end to his insanities. The suggestion did not seem to make much impression on the minister. He did not disapprove in principle, but he was worried by the King's constitutional right to dismiss the government, even if it had a majority in Parliament. Our emissary assured him that the Army would intervene in that case, and the government could simply refuse to resign.

In the report of this interview which was submitted to the Committee, Ahmed Anouar notes: "Serag Eddin hesitated, and I felt that slight persuasion would bring him to our way of thinking. He trusted us now, and the ice was broken. He talked quite freely for some time, asking about our Society, its aims, the number of officers who belonged to it. Suddenly he asked me point-blank: 'Who do you think is the best man for

Commander-in-Chief of the Army?' As we were talking of the Army, and not of the movement, I did not think it indiscreet to mention the name of Lewa Seif EL Din, which would compromise no one. 'An excellent choice,' he said, thinking, I suppose, that I had revealed the name of the leader of the Society of Free Officers."

We had thought we could count on the Wafd, to the point of entrusting it with the government of Egypt after the *coup d'etat.* We were quickly disenchanted. The Wafd was playing a double game. Our proposition was never even conveyed to the cabinet as we had intended. It remained a secret between Nahas Pasha and Serag Eddin.

The King was informed by his agents of the undercurrent of agitation in the Army, and he was well aware that something was afoot. We heard that he had referred to the Free officers in veiled terms to the Chief of Staff, Ferik Heydar Pasha. Our

Committee met in Cairo, and fixed the *coup d'etat* for March, 1952. Gamal Abdul Nasser was re-elected president. But events were proceeding at a dizzying speed, and the great day was postponed for the last time.

The battle of the Canal Zone was at its height, but now the Phalanxes were fighting for their own ends, and the Wafd government had lost control. British troops destroyed villages and terrorized the population. Women and children were among the victims. The first woman to be killed was named Om Saber. Her name was to be given to the first village built in the Province of Liberation, which is being reclaimed from the Western Desert. A second village was to immortalize the name of Omar Chahin, a hero of the University Phalanxes, who fell at Tel-el-Kebir.

Tension was rising in the whole country. The Army was purposely kept out of the way. I was stationed in the Sinai peninsula, together with Abdul Hakim Amer and Salah Salem. The High Commissioner sent General Tewfik Megahad from Cairo to talk to us, but he only made matters worse by his clumsiness, his defeatism and his dull lecturing.

"The time has not yet come," he said. "We are at the frontiers of Israel, and we must teach the Israelis a lesson before we attack the British." Salah Salem, furious, shouted, "No Sir! Our chief enemy is England. She occupies our country, and we must get rid of her first."

His words were greeted with cries of approval, and Megahad made a report to Cairo in which he described Salem as a "subversive element." We countered by protesting to Ferik Heydar about the way in which this curious inspector had tried to

demoralize the Army with pessimistic talk, and he was transferred to some obscure command in the South.

On December 25th, we were in the mess at Rafah— Salem, Amer, and several others. It was my birthday, and my friends insisted on celebrating. Suddenly the telephone rang. Nasser's voice came on the line from Cairo. He said: "Teytel arrives today. Be ready to receive him."

The reader may think that Teytel was a new recruit, but it was, in fact, a powerful mine which we planned to give as a Christmas present to the first British ship which passed through the Canal. We had not expected

Anything so large, for it was a monstrous affair, contained in four cases. We had to assemble it, and one of our comrades, who was an expert, was to lay it. Reasons of security urged that it be transported immediately to its destination. In fact, the mine was never exploded. It is still carefully hidden away somewhere in Egypt, where the Free Officers determined that it should remain as long as there was a British soldier in the Canal Zone.

The Egyptians were speaking the only language which the colonialists understood: brute force, blood, sabotage and dynamite. It appears that Great Britain really understood this time, and that the guerrilla warfare 11951 made them revise their international policy.

The strategic importance of the Suez Canal need hardly be stated. It separates Africa from Asia on a great international trade route. The British had built a complex system of military, naval and air

installations on the banks of the Canal, which was without any doubt one of the most formidable bases in the world. And yet, however powerful Suez might seem in theory, in practice it was one of little value, because it had been forced on an unwilling and hostile people. It was a fortified island in the middle of a raging sea.

If Britain has been forced to pack up and go elsewhere, she can blame no one but herself. She has never tried to make friends, but stirred up hatred instead. She humiliated Egypt too often.

On January 2sth, 1952, a battalion of the Egyptian Auxiliary Police was surrounded at Ismailia, and called upon to surrender. The battalion refused, and resisted heroically when attacked by tanks and light artillery. There were more than seventy dead. Public opinion was outraged by the news. On the following day, an orgy of violence broke out in Cairo. This was the celebrated "Black Saturday."

The work of destruction began at about eleven o'clock in the morning, in the Place de L'Opera, where the mobs set fire to cafes, bars and cinemas. An army of idlers and trouble-makers—the rabble of a town of two million inhabitants—brought together by some mysterious signal, bore down on the center of the town. Gunsmiths' shops were broken into and looted. Barclay's Bank was set on fire, and clerks trapped in the basement were asphyxiated. Twelve people were killed at the Turf Club. Before night fell there were other victims. The whole center of the town was ablaze.

From a window on the second floor of the Abdin Palace, a man watched Cairo burn. Terrible foreboding must have seized Farouk when he saw, for the first time, the fateful writing on the wall, lit by the dull glare of the flames.

The city was in the hands of the insurrectionists, and the police did nothing. either they were

powerless, or they were acting in complicity. Not until six o'clock in the evening was the Army called in to restore order, but by then the damage was done. The Free Officers who were in Cairo that day were ordered to do all they could to stop the riots.

Black Saturday was an orgy of uncontrolled mob violence, motivated by hunger and despair. This does not excuse the episode, but it does account for it.

While the capital city of Egypt was in the grip of anarchy, the King was giving a banquet at Abdin, the Prime Minister was visiting his manicurist, and the Minister for the Interior was moving a piece of furniture he had just acquired. Such were Egypt's "leaders" at this time.

The government was reduced to a shadow. It had lost all control of the situation. The only organization which remained on its feet, and retained any authority, was the Army.

On the day following Black Saturday, the King dismissed Nahas Pasha like a lackey for the fourth time in his career, and called on Aly Maher to form a new cabinet. Aly Maher perfectly understood the causes and implications of the rioting. The prices of bread, sugar and oil were reduced. Aly Maher made no atmpt to consult the King, and governed as though he did not exist.

He denounced the negligence of those responsible for the situation, but took no action against them. He adjourned parliament, but took no steps to break the Wafd.

He was, in fact, too much a part of the regime to try to reform it. His government was strong enough to keep both the King and the mob in check, but not strong enough to proceed any further. Farouk, who

had thought of fleeing the country, had gotten no further than leaving Cairo. Now he returned to Cairo and to the attack. Thirty-two days after assuming office, Aly Maher was forced to resign.

He was succeeded by Neguib Hilaly, a breakaway Wafdist. An honest but weak figure, Hilaly lacked Aly Maher's political grasp, and he was too much under the King's thumb. His first measures, though justified, looked like acts of vengeance against his former comrades. Serag Eddin, Secretary of the Wafd party, was exiled, and the Wafd parliament was dissolved. This looked like the beginning of a purge, and the court party grew uneasy.

Karim Tabet, Farouk's press officer, and Elias Andraos, one of the palace clique, could think of no better plan than to ask the United States ambassador, Mr. Jefferson Caffery, to help them overthrow Hilaly.

This move was characteristic of the political morality of the last days of the old regime, when it was considered quite natural to invite the intervention of a foreign power in Egyptian affairs. This story was told to Galal Eddin EL Hamamsy, one of my colleagues on the newspaper *El Gumbouriya, by* the distinguished diplomat himself at a farewell dinner on his return to the United States.

Like so many before him, Hilaly hoped to consolidate his position by coming to terms with Britain. He was unsuccessful. He resigned on June 30th.

Hussein Sirry, an old and skilled politician, who took a much firmer line with the King, replaced him. He dealt very mildly with the Wafd, however, just as Aly Nlaher had done. He canceled the restrictive measures taken against their leaders. Then, with Egypt at her last gasp, he announced a general election.

The Wafd came to life, thinking that its hour had come again. The hour never did come, for clouds were gathering in the sky, and the storm was about to engulf the King and his pack of politicians.

After Black Saturday, and the succession of indecisive governments which followed it, the Free Officers were spurred on to start the overthrow of the regime as quickly as possible. The whole of Egypt was tired of anarchy. We had to put an end to chaos. An urgent meeting of our Executive Committee was called on February 10th. Public opinion was in our favor. The Revolution was fixed for March, 1952

Gamal approached Kaimakam Rachad Mehanna for the second time, informing him of our plans. He approved wholeheartedly, and promised the cooperation of the Army corps under his command. This action of Oamal's worried me. I had already

had occasion to warn him against Mehanna's cunning and duplicity. What followed showed that my fears were only too well founded.

Just when all arrangements had been completed for the deployment of Mehanna's troops in our plan of action, he suddenly announced to the Committee that he could no longer keep in contact with us, as he was being transferred to EL Arish. Discreet Enquiries at the War office revealed that the transfer had been made at the express request of Mehanna himself. Now that the situation had become serious, he preferred to keep well away from the scene, so that he could change his allegiance if we failed.

He did not really believe that we would succeed, and had no intention of throwing in his lot with us until we had gained at least one victory. It was a sad blow to all except myself—I knew the gentleman rather better than they.

As a result of Mehanna's desertion, the Committee was forced to postpone the execution of its plans.

Meanwhile, we had decided that a respected senior officer should be chosen, who would be set up as a symbolic leader of the Revolution when the day finally arrived. The choice was narrowed to three candidates deemed worthy of the honor: Ferik Aziz EL Masri, General Fouad Sadek, and General Mohammed Neguib.

Aziz EL Masri was approached first. He declined on account of his great age and poor health, preferring to remain the spiritual father of our movement.

Next, we approached Fouad Sadek, who knew little of what was going on, though he was aware of the existence of the Society of Free Officers. At the

time when we contacted him, the post of Chief-of-Staff of the Army was vacant, and our emissary, Salah Salem, promised that the Free Officers would use their influence to ensure that he was appointed. General Sadek seemed satisfied with the arrangement, when the telephone rang and he was informed that he had been appointed Chief-of-Staff by the King. When he replaced the receiver, he had changed his mind.

Thinking that he had no further use for our good offices, he refused our offer, and brusquely dismissed Salah Salem, who swore never to set foot in his home again. As it happened, Sadek never did receive the appointment which meant so much to him. Now there remained only Mohammed Neguib.

It is not generally known that General Neguib took no active part in the revolutionary movement. The truth is that President Nasser, a man without

personal ambition, wished to yield the place of honor to an older man, a soldier whose honesty and bravery was widely recognized. Neguib had been seriously wounded three times on the field of battle.

The world saw General Neguib's star rise and fall in the Egyptian firmament with the speed of a meteor. However painful it may be, I must tell his story, so that the world may know who it was sought dictatorship, and who democracy.

General Neguib was no stranger to the Free officers. On two occasions we had given proof of our esteem. In December, 1951, he was in command of the Frontier Corps, a body of well trained and well equipped troops. T his was one of the most important commands in the Egyptian Army. Suddenly General Hussein Sirry Amer, one of Farouk's puppets, detested by the Free Officers, replaced him. It was a deliberate provocation by the King. Neguib was not a member of our movement,

but the fact that he had received this unwarranted humiliation inclined him to sympathy with our revolutionary ideals. It was in this way that the Society of Free Officers established relations with General Neguib.

On another occasion we were able to push him into the limelight. In December each year a public meeting is held by the Military Club, so those members may elect a president and a committee. The Free Officers decided to nominate General Neguib for the presidency, and certain of our own members for the committee.

The King was supporting his puppet general, Hussein Sirry Amer, for the presidency, and the struggle which ensued between the Palace and the Society of Free Officers was a trial of strength which enabled us to demonstrate publicly our opposition to the monarchy. The certainty that we would win disturbed the King, who tried to sidestep

the issue by postponing the meeting for an indefinite period. This was a clumsy move, for our Committee ignored the royal command, and invited all Free Officers to meet on the original date.

When the meeting took place, the company kept five minutes silence in memory of Captain Abdul Kader Taha, one of our most active members, who had been assassinated by the secret police at the King's instigation. Then General Neguib was unanimously elected president, and the Free Officers obtained a crushing majority in the committee. This was the first direct blow we struck against the King. Farouk might well have heeded the warning. Instead, he dug his heels in still further.

It was in this way that General Neguib emerged from obscurity. We constructed a legend round him which everybody believed. The whole world was under the impression that he had been the brain

and the motive force behimd the Revolution. We did not wish to explain he was simply a puppet. So he became a legendary figure, a sort of George Washington of Egypt, crowned by the glory of a successful revolution.

It was a touch of a magic wand which made this man appear to the world at large as a great revolutionary, and the liberator of the Nile. For he was really no more than an ordinary, middle class man, a good father to his children, whose ambition was to end his career happily shuttling between his office and his fireside. For years the rest of us had worked in secret to prepare Neguib's path to immortality. We raised him to the summit, and then we had to dash him down again.

Until July 21st, 1952, Neguib knew nothing of the role which we had planned for him, and which he was to continue to play until October, 1952. On July

15th, orders came from high authority that the committee of the Military Club was to be dissolved. This was a surprise, although everybody knew that the King bore the committee a grudge, for he could not forgive the fact that it had rejected the president of his choice. Also, he feared the increasing influence of the committee. The committee was dissolved, and an interim committee

was formed from which all Eree Officers were barred. We knew very well that the next blow would be aimed directly at the revolutionary movement.

On July 16th, the Executive Committee of the Society of Free officers met under the presidency of Gamal Abdul Nasser. Present were Hassan Ibrahim, Kamal Eddin Hussein, Abdul Hakim Amer, Khaled Mohieddin, Abdul Latif Boghdadi and myself. It was the most important meeting we ever held, for the situation demanded swift decisions and even swifter action. It was a race between the Palace and

the Movement. The Minister of War was already preparing to disperse the Free Officers all over Egypt by wholesale postings and changes of command. Our chances of success depended on speed.

On July 20th, the Committee ordered all our officers to report to their assembly points, and to remain there until midnight. Kamal Eddin Hussein acted as liaison officer, keeping everybody informed on new developments.

The Executive Committee had devised a No. 2 plan, which could be put into operation immediately, if we failed in our attempt to overthrow the regime. This plan envisaged the mass assassination of the leading figures of the regime. Gamal Abdul Nasser strongly opposed this plan,

however. He said it would give the reactionaries a chance to cry anarchy, and to denounce the Free Officers as criminal agitators.

While all this was happening, Neguib was at home, seeing nothing, hearing nothing. As yet, we had told him nothing of the role which had been planned for him. Gamal felt that it was now time to bring him into the picture.

On the afternoon of July 20th, Gamal went to Neguib's house, but he was unable to tell him anything, as two of Neguib's friends were present: Colonel Galal Nada, and the well-known journalist, Mohammed Hussein Heykal. For the sake of appearances, Gamal and Abdul Hakim Amer, who had accompanied him, talked for some time about the dissolution of the committee of the Military Club, and the possibility of getting the order rescinded. Our two emissaries then left, having been unable to fulfil their mission, leaving the

General under the impression that the sole purpose of their visit had been the affairs of the Military Club. Gamal thought it unwise to make another attempt, in case Neguib was being watched.

On July 21St, our preparations for the *coup d'etat* were not entirely completed, and it was postponed until the night of the 22nd. Twenty-four hours before zero hour General Neguib still knew nothing whatsoever about the plot.

A bad poker player, Farouk was also a bad gambler in politics. In spite of the storm warnings on the horizon, he thought his authority had been merely slightly shaken, and he tried to assert himself by forcing the appointment of General Sirry Amer as Minister of War. The Prime Minister, Hussein Sirry, resigned. He was succeeded, on July 21st, by Neguib EL Hilaly.

It was the fifth Egyptian government in six months! Obviously the machinery of government

had completely broken down. Instead of constitutional law, we were being governed by the whims of an incurably pig-headed monarch devoid of any sense of public responsibility. Each government was as sterile and as incapable of action as the last. The people had lost all confidence in their leaders, and impatiently awaited their liberation. The end was very near.

Time and experience suggest that tyranny is very close to anarchy, in that both end by destroying the values of civilization: justice, morality and reason. A State which does not care for the well-being of its people ceases to be a State, and the people have the right to act in accordance with natural law. It is their duty to fight against despotism, treason or any menace to the life of the community. It is the people who set up governments, and define the limits of their authority. The Egyptian leaders failed to fulfil their obligations, and their power reverted by right

to the people. The people reclaimed their sovereignty.

In 1952 the Egyptians did only what the English had done under Cromwell three hundred years before; what the Americans did in 1776: and the French in 1789. But our revolution was less bloody then these.

Chapter Twelve

JULY 22nd, 1952. We had been waiting for this day for ten years. For ten long years we had held back, masking our true feelings, reserving our energies for the task before us.

Now the Executive Committee issued battle orders. We adopted the slogan: Resolution and Boldness. The password was Nasr (Victory). Zero hour was midnight. The carefully thought-out plan of campaign was the work of Gamal Abdul Nasser, who had drawn up the main outline, and Abdul Hakim Amer and Kamal Eddin Hussein, who were responsible for the details.

'There were three main phases in the operation. 1) The seizure of military authority. 2) The seizure of civil authority. 3) The deposition of the King.

The assault sections were ready. We were in communication with all branches of the Army, and we knew that the regiments in Cairo were ready to join us. There was little doubt that the other regiments throughout the country would follow suit.

Twenty-four hours previously I had been at Rafah, when I received an urgent summons from Gamal Abdul Nasser. As the train carried me to Cairo, my thoughts went back to Mankabad and our youth, and thought of the distance we had traveled since then. I felt oppressed, as one does in the long July days when a storm approaches. And yet, in my heart, I knew that victory would be ours.

I was awakened from my dreams by the train jolting to a stop. We had arrived. It was Ax:30 p.m. There was no one to meet me, and at home I found no message. I decided to give my children a treat, and I took them to an open-air cinema near my

home. In the meantime, Gamal, who was summoning the conspirators himself, called for me in his famous little Austin car. He called again an hour later and, finding me still out, left a note, which said quite simply: "It happens tonight. Rendezvous at Abdul Hakim's, 11 p.m."

My heart leaped. I left my astonished and anxious children with the porter and bounded up the stairs. I tore off my civilian clothes and hurriedly threw on my uniform. In five minutes I was at the wheel of my car. But the place of rendezvous, when I got there, was deserted. The operation had already begun.

The reason for this early start was that an Intelligence officer, Captain Saad Tewfik, had warned the Committee that the government had already been alarmed. General Hussein Farid, Chief of Staff, had called an urgent meeting of Army chiefs, and a council of war was being held at

General Headquarters. Gamal Abdul Nasser had received the news calmly. "It will save us time and trouble," he said. "We can take them all together, instead of one by one at their homes." There was no turning back now. Gamal gave the order to attack G.H.Q.

Meanwhile, the generals had dispatched a company to surround the quarters of the Free Officers. The battle had scarcely begun when Captain Mohammed Chided, who led the government troops, marched forward and called out that he was placing himself and his men at our disposition. Gamal profited by this windfall by sending the troops back to where they had come from, but with Abdul Hakim Amer in command.

Revolver in hand, Gamal captured the G.H.Q. and took the generals prisoner. It was a good catch, for

the High Command, with a few honorable exceptions, were the King's men.

Guessing what had happened, I drove from Abdul Hakim Amber's house to the G.H.Q. At the Military Hospital, just opposite, I was stopped by one of our sentries, who refused to let me pass, although we had served in the same unit at Rafah, and he knew me quite well. I did not know the password. In vain I tried to persuade him that I was part of the conspiracy. There was nothing to be done—I would pass only over his dead body! The crackle of machine gun fire grew louder. Suddenly I saw Abdul Hakim Amer in the distance, and I shouted to him with all the force in my lungs. He recognized my voice and came over and rescued me from my too literal-minded sentry.

At midnight, the assault sections which had been standing by began to move, and they occupied

without resistance all the strategic points: government buildings, telephone exchanges and the radio station. Gamal was everywhere, giving orders, making sure that the operation was carried out exactly according to plan. The whole affair went very swiftly. Afterwards it was maliciously reported that the operation was so like a *blitzArieg* it must have been planned by German generals.

Most of the town was asleep, the streets silent. The people did not yet know what had happened. The Executive Committee met again at Headquarters. One thing troubled us: Would the British intervene? It was quite likely. Accordingly, at 2 a.m. we sent armor, antitank units, and infantry and cavalry detachments along the road to Suez, where they deployed five kilometers from the British positions. Our troops were ordered to stop he British, whatever the cost, if they made any move towards Cairo. Reconnaissance aircraft flew cease-

lessly over the Canal Zone, observing the movements of the occupying forces.

In the early hours of the morning, we sent an emissary, Captain Aly Sabry (now political adviser to President Nasser) to the British Embassy. Aly Sabry handed to Councilor Sir Walter Stuart a communication from the Junta, in which the British were warned that what had happened was a purely internal affair, and that the least sign of intervention would be regarded as an act of hostility. Sir Walter tried vainly to obtain further information. The military attach, Brigadier-General Goulbourn, was furious. He was supposed to know everything that was happening in Egypt, and now he was presented with a *fait accompli* about which he had known absolutely nothing.

There was the same amazed unbelief at the British Middle East Headquarters at Fayid, where General Feasting was gotten out of bed to answer

an urgent call from the Embassy. Troops were held ready to move, pending instructions from London. The British Mediterranean Fleet steamed towards Suez. The Home Fleet, which usually leaves British waters only on times of crisis, set sail for the Canal to "show the flag."

At 3 a.m.. General Neguib, who had not yet been told anything, received a telephone call from the Minister of the Interior, Mortada EL Maraghi. The Minister said: "Your boys are kicking up a row. When are you going to stop them?"

"Aly boys?" said Neguib. "What are you talking about?"

Neguib did not know that the *coup d'etat* had been accomplished until 5 a.m., when Captain Gamal Nazim and Captain Saad Tewfik called at his home and invited him to Headquarters. He arrived

half an hour later, saluted everybody very amiably and said: *"Mobrouk!* Congratulations."

Neguib was immediately appointed Commander-inChief of the Armed Forces.

At 6 a.m. I sent Gamal Nazim to deliver our Manifesto to the Nation to the newspapers. In the meantime, Abdul Hakim Amer had composed a proclamation to the Egyptian people, which I broadcast at 7 a.m. The following is an extract from it:

"To the people of Egypt. Egypt has lived through one of the darkest periods in its history. The Army has been tainted by the agents of dissolution. This was one of the causes of our defeat in Palestine. Led by fools, traitors and incompetents, the Army was incapable of defending Egypt. That is why we have carried out a purge. The Army is now in the hands of men in whose ability, integrity and patriotism you can have complete confidence. The

former Army chiefs who are now under arrest will be released when circumstances permit.

"Egypt will greet our Movement with hope and with joy, and she can be sure that the Army is pledged to protect the national interest. I take this opportunity to warn the Egyptian people against its enemies, and to ask them to allow no acts of violence or destruction to be committed. Such acts can only harm Egypt. They will be regarded as acts of treason and will be severely punished. The Army, in cooperation with the police, will be responsible for law and order.

"I particularly wish to reassure our friends, the foreign nationals in Egypt, that the Army considers itself entirely responsible for the protection of their persons and property. May God sustain us!"

The dawn of July 23rd was glorious. It was the dawn of our national awakening. It seemed as if a great gulf had opened between the Egypt of yesterday—oppressed, uneasy, discontented—and the confident, free and united Egypt of today.

The news spread through the city. The whole country awoke in a transport of joy. Crowds gathered in the streets, embracing and congratulating each other. Cheers greeted our soldiers wherever they went. At Sayeda Zeinab, a street lemonade seller offered free drinks to everybody. The will of the nation to enter upon the path of honor and justice, liberty and fraternity, was reborn.

Long live the Revolution! The cry resounded ceaselessly, rising to the skies like an act of faith.

The first part of the operation had been easy. The Salem brothers had taken command of the Army at Rafah and Sinai. The whole of the Army was ours. The second phase of the revolution concerned the transfer of the civil power.

Neguib EL Hilaly, the Prime Minister, got in touch with us at 9 a.m. on the 23rd. General Neguib spoke to him on the telephone. We told him what to say. As this talk had no concrete results, the Committee asked the King to summon Aly Maher to form a government. It seemed to us that the man who had established order after the riots of Black Saturday should be capable of handling the existing political situation. Nobody at Headquarters knew his address, but fortunately a journalist named Ihsan Abdul Kaddous was present, and he offered to conduct me to his home.

Aly Maher was not alone when we arrived. He was engaged with Edgar Gallad, the proprietor of the *Joarnal d'Egypte.* Aly Maher asked me if I had any objection to his guest being present during our conversation. T replied quite frankly that I would prefer that he was not.

I offered Aly Maher, in the name of the Junta, the premiership of the new government. There was a silence, broken only by the whistling of four bombardiers who stood outside.

"Are they your men?" said Aly Maher.

"Yes," I replied. "We are in control."

I then frankly stated our views on the deplorable state of the country and the rottenness of the King and his clique. My companion kicked my ankle to indicate that I should be more discr-eet. I took no notice, for Aly Maher had to know exactly What was in my mind. He said he was willing to cooperate

with us, on condition that the summons to form a new government came from the King himself.

"It is as good as done," I replied.

As he accompanied me to the door, Aly Maher promised to refer the matter to the King at once.

"Do as you wish," I said. "We are acting quite openly. Neguib EL Hilaly has been asked to resign."

I returned immediately to Headquarters, where my comrades were holding a council of war. As I was reporting on my mission, Moustapha Sadek, ex-Queen Narriman's uncle, arrived with a message from the Palace: the King had expressed his willingness to appoint general Neguib Minister of War. This proposal was rejected.

The King then thought of another, even more foolish, idea. He invited us to form a government ourselves. The deception was obvious: Farouk was trying to win us over to his side.

When we refused, the King finally called on Aly Maher.

The King was still unaware of the imminence of his fall. He believed that the Army was simply cleaning up its own ranks, and that afterwards things would return to normal. But we were preparing to dethrone him. We presented a list of demands, using Aly Maher as an intermediary, in Which we particularly required the dismissal of the Royal attendants. We expected in this way to precipitate a crisis, for we were certain that Farouk would never agree to being separated from the court clique. Much to our surprise, Aly Maher reported that the King had accepted our demand.

Gamal Abdul Nasser said to me: "The King must be expelled today, or tomorrow at the latest." This was on the morning of July 25th.

I was instructed to inform the government of the Committee's decision. General Neguib expressed a

desire to accompany Me, and a military aircraft took us to Alexandria in twenty minutes.

The crowd acclaimed Neguib with frantic cries:

'Long live our deliverer!" I went to Bulkeley to confer with the Prime Minister.

The kill would have to be made quickly, for the situation might still turn in favor of the King. We learned that Farouk had succeeded in communicating with the British Middle East Headquarters at Fayid to ask for military support. Rumors started that the British were speeding to the rescue, that a battalion was already on the outskirts of Cairo, that General Festing's paratroops were to drop at the Sporting Club. Dozens of crazy rumors were circulating, and they were believed by many. If anarchy broke out, Farouk could save himself by forcing the British to intervene on the pretext of re-establishing order.

We drew up the terms of the King's abdication, but Colonel Zakaria Mohieddin, who was in charge of military operations at Alexandria, informed us that the dethronement could not take place that night. His troops were exhausted. They had not slept for three days. We told the Colonel that there was no time to lose, and that we were in the same condition as his men.

"That is none of my business," he replied calmly. "What is my business is that my men need rest.,The operation will begin at 8 a.m. tomorrow."

We passed the night in heated debate. Gamal Salem thought that the King should not be allowed to go free: he should be tried and condemned to death. Gamal claimed that execution was the only way in which Farouk's crimes against the people could be expiated. I objected that a trial would drag on and on, and it would be dangerous to keep the

King in the country. We wanted to be rid of the King's person immediately.

The debate went on until 2 a.m., Unti1 we decided that the question must be submitted to the Committee. At 2:30 a.m., Gamal Salem left by air for Cairo. He returned at 7 a.m. with the result. Nine members of the Committee had voted on the fate of the King, and the majority had voted for exile.

General Neguib, who was not yet a member of the Committee, had had no vote. Gamal Abdul Nasser had put the question of the King's fate to General Aziz EL Masri, who replied: "A head does not interest me until it is cut off."

At daybreak of July 26th, Colonel Mohieddin held a council of war and issued his final orders. The troops occupied strategic points without meeting any resistance. By 8 a.m. they had surrounded the Ras-El-Tin and Montazah Palaces. In Cairo, the Koubbeh and Abdin Palaces were also surrounded.

Infantry, artillery and tanks were deployed in battle order, and the guns were ready to bombard the RasEl-Tin Palace. The troops were to withhold their fire until ordered. The Palace Guard took up their positions. A shot rang out from a turret in the outer wail. Our troops opened fire, and the gun was silenced. Seven Palace Guards were hit.

The King had been taken by surprise, and now his uneasiness turned into desperation. He did not know his head was at stake, but his gambler's instinct told him that he was playing his last card. Secretly, he sent one of the palace electricians to the United States Ambassador, Jefferson Caffery, urgently requesting his presence.

When Caffery arrived, Farouk greeted him by saying: "I have never been so glad to see anyone in my life." He begged the ambassador to help him escape aboard an American warship. The ambassador dis-

suaded him, arguing that it was unworthy of him to flee the country in this way.

Caffery had several talks with the Prime Minister that day, all aiming at the avoidance of bloodshed. This was the only part which the United States Ambassador played in this last episode of Farouk's reign.

At 9 a.m., I went to see the Prime Minister at Bulkeley, accompanied by General Neguib. On the way to his office we met the American military attaché, Who had just come from an audience with the King, and who had been present when the firing took place. He was very agitated.

"As far as I know, the king has agreed to all the Army's demands," he said. "I demand an explanation of what is happening at Ras-El-Tin." He said that Washington demanded a guarantee of the

safety of the King's person. He grew more calm When I assured him that the matter would be considered by the Cabinet in due course.

Aly Maher received us exultantly and showed me the documents which the King had signed, dismissing his unsavory court retinue. I cast my eye over one of them—Elias Andraos, a man who had made and broken ministers. He had made a spelling mistake in signing his own name, and his handwriting was that of a man who hardly knew the Arabic language. I was disgusted.

Aly Maher was under the impression that we had now made our final demands of the King. He was quickly disillusioned. I took the ultimatum from my briefcase and handed it to General Neguib, who in turn handed it to the Prime Minister.

When Aly Maher finished reading it, he was as pale as death. 1 broke the silence by remarking that it was partly his fault that it had come to this, for he

had been responsible for Farouk's political education. Aly Maher replied in a voice charged with emotion: "Yes, it is true. I often advised him, but he would never listen. He deserves this end."

The Prime Minister signed one copy of the ultimatum and went immediately to Ras-El-Tin to deliver it to the King. It ran as follows:

Whereas the total anarchy in which the country has of recent months been thrown, and which has spread to all domains, is a result of your bad administration, your violations of the Constitution, and your disregard of the will of the people to a point where no citizen could feel secure in his life, dignity and property.

Whereas your persistence in this course has compromised the name of Egypt among the nations, and treacherous and corrupt persons have,

under your protection, continued to amass shameful fortunes and to squander public funds while the people remained a prey to hunger and poverty.

Whereas these facts have been brought to light by the war in Palestine, the traffic in defective arms and ammunition to which it.gave rise, and the judgments pronounced by the Courts on those responsible revealed your intervention—intervention which distorted truth, shook confidence in Justice, encouraged traitors in their crimes, enriched some and corrupted others.

Therefore the Army, representing the power of the People, has authorized me to demand that your Majesty abdicate the Throne in favor of the Heir Apparent, His Highness Prince Ahmed Fouad, on this day, Saturday, July 26th, 1952,, and that you leave the country before 6 p.m. of this same day

The Army holds Your Majesty responsible for any consequences which may result from your refusal to conform to the will of the people.

Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces,

(signed) Mohammed Neguib.

The King submitted. He conferred at length with Aly Maher, and asked if he would be permitted to visit Egypt as a private citizen. To placate him, the Prime Minister replied: "Why not? The Duke of Windsor returns to England from time to time."

Farouk expressed a desire to leave on the *Mahroussa,* which was under the command of Captain Galal Allouba. He also wished to take two of his secretaries with him—Pulli and Helmi, two past masters in the art of intrigue and swindling. Finally he asked that the personal fortune of himself and his sisters should be administered on his behalf.

Only the first of these demands was granted by the Committee. Farouk submitted without resistance. He had no choice. All he could expect to save now was his life.

At Headquarters, we were now engaged in drawing up the formal act of abdication. We were

not satisfied with the text drawn up by Sanhoury and Soliman Hafez, two jurists, for it made no mention of the will of the people.

Gamal Salem rectified the omission. The document read as follows:

Whereas We have always sought the happiness and welfare of Our People, and sincerely wish to spare them the difficulties which have arisen this critical time.

We therefore conform to the will of the People.

We have decided to abdicate the throne in favor of Our heir, Prince Ahmed Fouad, and in the present Prescript do give Our orders to this end to His Excellency Aly Maher Pasba, Prime Minister, that he may act accordingly.

While Soliman Hafez took the document to the RasEl-Tin Palace for Farouk's signature, I went to the Admiralty to inform them that the *Mahroussa* was authorized to sail for any destination of the King's choice. We did not know exactly what the attitude of the Navy was, for it had never belonged to our organization. The warships were in harbor at Alexandria, and it was feared that one of them might sink the *Mahroussa.* To guard against this danger, we decided to split up among the various ships, each officer being responsible for maintaining order aboard the ship to which he was assigned.

Colonel Mohieddin learned that the Coastguard intended to blow up the Royal yacht. I immediately telephoned thc Free Officers of the Coastal Artillery to inform them that we had undertaken to let the King go free, and that they would be held responsible for his safety.

At noon, the King signed the act of abdication. He had not been given much time, and preparations were made in great haste for his departure by 6 o'clock that evening. Feverish activity reigned aboard the Royal yacht, where more that two hundred trunks containing personal property of the King were being loaded.

Shortly before the time of departure, the King's sisters arrived at the Palace. The Prime Minister and the United States Ambassador arrived at almost the same moment. Farouk was wearing the white dress uniform of an Admiral. The farewells took place in the Grand Salon. At 6p.m. Farouk said good-bye to his sisters and brother-in-law, and he left the palace by a staircase leading to a landing stage, where a launch took him out to the *Mahroussa.*

General Neguib, Gamal Salem and Hussein EL Chefei went aboard. Saluting the General, Farouk said enigmatically: " I should have done the same

thing myself, if you hadn't." What Farouk meant by this sybilline utterance has never been explained.

I watched the *Mahroussa* from a destroyer. As the Royal yacht left harbor, the destroyer saluted the exKing with twenty-one guns.

A reign had ended. One Egypt was saying good-bye to the other. Farouk was leaving a debased and exhausted Egypt, a country with curses on its lips. No regime ever fell more easily. The July Revolution was swift because it was unanimous. Three days were enough to throw down a dynasty which had occupied the throne for one hunted and fifty years, and its fall was greeted with universal approbation.

If no Egyptian rose up to defend the monarchy, it was because it was indefensible. Events have an

implacable logic of their own, and that logic led in Egypt to the abdication of July 26th, 1952 .

From the bridge of the destroyer, I watched Farouk pass in the twilight of history. The sailors around me were jubilant. Suddenly I felt faint. For three days I had not slept. I had lived on my nerves. Now I was feeling the effect of those long hours of tension. I had to be helped down the gangway.

When I arrived at Headquarters, I threw myself on a bed in the Orderly Officer's room, still in my sweatsoaked uniform, and fell instantly asleep.

I awoke refreshed early next morning, and breakfasted in a little cafe which I used to use when I was hiding from the police. When I returned to Headquarters, I found General Neguib waiting for me. Together we went to the military hospital to talk to the Palace Guards who had been wounded at Ras-El-Tin.

The British had made no attempt to interfere, but on July 27rh, the British *charge d'affaires* (the Ambassador, Sir Ralph Stevenson, was on leave) presented himself to the Revolutionary Committee with three demands. These were:

1) To impose a curfew for the protection of foreign nationals.

2) To set up a Regency Council immediately.

3) To uphold the monarchy.

The Committee was surprised and irritated to receive this unsolicited advice. A nation which is fighting for its independence cannot tolerate a foreign power trying to impose its will in this way. The time when that could happen in Egypt had ended when the *Mahroussa* put to sea. Gamal Salem and I explained this to the *charge d'affaires,* and informed him that from now on such lack of

tact could only be harmful to Anglo-Egyptian relations.

That curious and megalomaniac personality Rachad Mehanna, who had been so cautious about throwing in his lot with us, appeared in Alexandria at this time to receive the acclamations of the people. He managed to persuade the Artillery Corps that he was one of the architects of the Revolution. It was difficult for the Free Officers to disown him without creating a rival fact.Dn. Instead, we decided to nominate him to the Regency Council with Abdul Moneim and Bahieddin Barakat. To qualify him for the post, we made him Minister of Communications for a few days.

But his *folie de grandeur* knew no bounds. He started to behave like a king, and the Committee

was forced to dismiss him. President Nasser offered him an embassy, and he refused. Later, he became involved Ina counterrevolutionary plot, and in November, 1952, he was sentenced to hard labor for life.

Before returning to Cairo, the Committee held a last meeting, at which Gamal Abdul Nasser offered to resign his presidency in favor of General Neguib. This was unanimously rejected.

Khaled Mohieddin, nicknamed "The Red Commander," felt that his left wing views might be an embarrassment to us and asked to quit the Committee for a diplomatic post. This was also rejected.

On July 28th we returned to Cairo, where we were lobbied by a crowd of opportunists and flatterers who swore their undying loyalty to the Revolution. Three days before, most of them had been swearing their undying loyalty to Farouk. Clearly their motto was: *"Le roi est mort, vive le Comitc!"*

The old regime had crumbled to the ground. The King had fallen without majesty, the leaders without virtue or dignity. There was nothing left but the ruins they had created.

Egypt had to be reconstituted. Gamal Salem proposed that we should reduce the Committee to three, or at the most, five members, in order to speed up this process. this proposal was rejected.

General Neguib did not attend our meetings, but conferred with us afterwards. He told us that he felt embarrassed at being pushed into the forefront and assuming a leading role for which he had not been prepared. Neguib's frank and amiable manner appealed to us all, and Squadron-Leader Abdul Latif Boghdadi said to me one day: "I love him as I love my father—perhaps even more."

This situation continued up to mid-August. On the 14th of that month, at a full session of the Committee, Gamal Abdul Nasser formally ceded his post as president to General Neguib. At the same time, the Committee co-opted four new members and became the Council of the Revolution.

This was the new government of Egypt. The secret society of Free Officers had dissolved itself after fulfilling its mission. The flame that had been

ignited at Mankabad now burned brightly over the whole land.