

Nasserism

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This is a term current in Western Europe and in North America, used especially often in France, and it may well be that France is the one who coined it.

For there remains among the French something of cleverness, and in their language some measure of flexibility, and they are for that reason the most skillful of peoples at coining words: no sooner does a meaning occur to the mind of one of their writers, or one of their scholars, or one of their statesmen, than he swiftly seeks out the word that conveys this meaning; and if he does not find it in the language as spoken and written, nor in the dictionaries, he coins for himself a word of his own that conveys what he intends, and people accept this word of his from him without difficulty or resistance.

I know of no contemporary nation that rivals the French in bending their language to their will, except the Arab nation, which coined thousands of words when its civilization was flourishing, and when many meanings arose for which the Arabs had had no prior acquaintance. And distinguished Arab intellectuals still coin words when they need them and do not find them in people's speech nor in the depths of books.

The meaning of this term which the French coined — in all likelihood — and which the Western nations of Europe and America took up from them, is everything that the President of the Egyptian Republic calls for and strives to achieve, on condition that the French and their like cast over whatever the President of the Republic calls for a color that appears in their eyes and hearts as dark, while Easterners see it as bright and radiant.

What This Simple Word Signifies

For resistance to colonialism in Egypt, the call upon conquered nations to resist it, steadfastness in the face of strong, oppressive nations, the rejection of whatever blatant or covert interference they attempt, the recovery of rights from whoever has usurped them however strong or wealthy he may be, the refusal to submit to what the powerful want and unite upon from time to time — intimidation by force, might, and economic boycott, or enticement by money and whatever resembles

money that might appeal to weak souls and to hearts devoid of faith in the homeland, of self-confidence, of pride in dignity, and of insistence upon man's right to a free life cleansed of all submission or servility —

all of this is what the French and their like denote by this simple, close, clear word, namely "Nasserism." The word, as you see, has been taken from the name of the President of the Republic, with these final letters added to it that are artificially employed to denote doctrines, outlooks, and beliefs in the sciences, religions, and philosophy. And all that the President of the Egyptian Republic calls for and strives to achieve is naturally hateful to the European and American West, because it is a resistance to what is inherent in the nature of the West: its perpetual ambition toward expansion, domination, the extension of authority, and the monopolizing of good. And so long as this call to liberation is hateful, every response to it is hateful as well, and every spread of it is a danger which the West must resist and strive to erase from the earth by whatever means it can.

Another Word

But there is another word which the West has not yet found; for it has not yet realized that it is sick, and that this illness of its is new, not previously known, and has not been studied by psychiatrists, nor by practitioners of individual or social psychoanalysis — and this term is "Nasseritis."

Those acquainted with European languages know, of course, that these letters now added to the name of the President of the Republic denote, among physicians, the names of ailments and afflictions that strike certain organs of the body.

And the souls of Westerners, and of their statesmen especially, are afflicted these days with a malady that comes to them from the President of the Egyptian Republic — one that has not, of course, struck their visible organs, but has struck their inward organs and faculties; for in their hearts is an illness that is hatred of Gamal Abdel Nasser, and in their minds is an illness that is the accusation of Gamal Abdel Nasser for every evil that befalls them from the nations that submitted to their authority for a time and have now begun to rise up and rebel against it in these days.

For the President of the Egyptian Republic is the source of what has befallen the French Empire and what continues to befall it to this day; he

is the source of what has befallen the English in some of their distant colonies and what continues to befall them in Cyprus, in Oman, in Bahrain, and in other places on earth where British colonialism was once settled and has now become uneasy and troubled. And everything that happens in the Arab world, east and west, revolves around the President of the Egyptian Republic and whatever proceeds from him or is directed at him. If Jordan veers away from the West, freeing itself of the British treaty and liberating its army from English command, the source of this is the President of the Egyptian Republic. If Tunisia or Morocco grows firm in supporting Algeria, or Tunisia or Morocco grows angry at the abduction of the Algerian leaders, the source of this is the President of the Egyptian Republic. If Lebanon holds fast to what ties it to France and America, this is aimed at the President of the Egyptian Republic, meant to vex him, to plot against him, and to incite against him. And if Jordan leans toward America and is swayed by its enticements and accepts its money, and for that corrupts its own domestic life — exiling some citizens and imprisoning others, and dismissing the rule of the Jordanian people — this too is aimed at the President of the Egyptian Republic, meant to wrong him, provoke him, and make him feel that he is not in control of all the Arab nations. And if Iraq, in these days, attempts to smooth matters between itself and Egypt, and does not corrupt or resist Egyptian broadcasting, this too is a scheme by the President of the Egyptian Republic against the British and the Americans.

The Great Catastrophe

Let the reader not suppose that I exaggerate or overstate; these are simply the facts of Western thinking in France, Britain, and America, as the newspapers and magazines and some of the books published in these countries portray it.

And the great catastrophe for the Westerners — and upon them as well — is that this call which the President of the Egyptian Republic makes has gone beyond the Arab world, east and west, and that other nations have responded to it at the Bandung Conference, and that it now has a bloc calling for it within the United Nations — the bloc of the Asian-African nations.

And the meaning of all this is that the President of the Egyptian Republic has become an affliction that embitters the lives of Western statesmen whether awake or dreaming in their sleep, and the Western nation most affected by this affliction is the French nation, whose

statesmen, and many of its writers and men of letters, have been struck by something resembling a fever. And this Nasserist fever in France has times when it intensifies until it exceeds forty degrees, and other times when it eases, but its temperature never once reaches the normal state; for the anniversaries of the Egyptian Revolution have raised the Nasserist temperature in France to its utmost, so much so that they have driven certain French writers, members of the Académie, out of their composure, ending them in something like delirium — the most striking manifestation of which was in an article published by the newspaper *Le Figaro*, by the well-known French writer François-Poncet, a man known for his keen intelligence, penetrating insight, and the breadth and depth of his culture.

The Delirious Fever

He was France's ambassador in Berlin in Hitler's days, at the time when Hitler was preparing for the last World War. And I know of no one who so excelled in portraying Hitler in his calm and in his anger and in his rage as this writer excelled in doing. Nor do I know of anyone who gave his government better or more sincere counsel than this writer did when Hitler was preparing for war. But this writer had purchased — so it appears — a not-inconsiderable number of shares in the old Suez Canal Company, and these shares — so it also appears — used to bring him a great deal of money every year; so the nationalization of the Canal last year dealt him a shock that stunned him, and he has not yet recovered from his stupor.

Last week he wrote an article published in *Le Figaro*, and I testify that it is truly a remarkable article, portraying the delirious fever in its most striking and most repellent form to the soul. I do not know whether Egyptians have read this article or not, but I can affirm that, had I been editor-in-chief of one of the Egyptian newspapers, I would have translated this article, so that Egyptians might know how the fever of Nasserism rises in France until it brings its sufferers to the utmost limits of ravings and delirium.

The Affliction of Liberation

And this fever that comes upon the French from the President of the Egyptian Republic had scarcely subsided before it began to rise again in these days; for the United Nations will convene next month, and the Asian-African bloc will raise within it the question of Algeria, and America does not hide its displeasure at the French inability to resolve this

problem. And the source of all this is, of course, the President of the Egyptian Republic; for he is, to the French — and to the other nations of the West as well — the sole party responsible for this great affliction called liberation, who seeks to restore to the conquered nations their full right to live as they themselves wish, not as the strong and the wealthy wish.

And this Asian-African bloc is strong — so it appears — and possesses much cunning and much shrewdness; so it is not strange that the French should place their hands upon their chests in apprehension lest this bloc should prevail within the United Nations and win a ruling on Algeria, or a ruling against France — and this, to the French, is the catastrophe greater than which they see no catastrophe in danger.

An Affliction With Two Faces

And thus the name of the President of the Republic has come to denote a hateful doctrine in the West, while at the same time denoting an affliction that corrupts Western thinking and judgment on many matters. The Westerners do not doubt that the President of the Egyptian Republic is attempting to establish a great empire gathering the whole Arab nation under a single banner. And the French do not doubt that Egypt's support for Algeria is sought neither for God's sake nor for Algeria's sake, but rather for the sake of an Egyptian empire, meant to secure Algeria for Egypt alone, to the exclusion of France. I did not know that delirium could bring people to such a point, but this is what we now see in the West, and what the Egyptians do not grasp, because they do not read the foreign press, and because their Arabic press does not depict it to them as it ought — indeed, it may not even know of it, being preoccupied instead with the events of the Arab world.

I say: this malady that has struck Western thinking, and which we see in the newspapers, magazines, and books, is a thing with two faces; one of them pleases and deceives, and the other saddens and displeases. For it may please the Egyptians — and it may also deceive them — to know that the West is preoccupied with them, hateful of them, apprehensive of them. But the life of nations is not built upon pleasure and vanity, but upon the proper assessment of things as they ought to be assessed, upon knowledge of their realities, upon benefiting from whatever in them is beneficial, and upon taking precaution against whatever in them is harmful or exposed to danger. Nor does it harm or displease Egypt that this government or that among the governments of

the West should hate her; for governments come and go. Rather, the whole of the harm and the whole of the danger lies in this: that hatred of Egypt, disavowal of her, and wariness of her should spread into the depths of the Western peoples themselves — those among them who are hostile to us and those among them who are merely reserved toward us.

Absurdity Must Be Resisted

For Egypt has absolutely no interest whatsoever in being misunderstood by peoples or in having ill thoughts entertained about her. Egyptians may well laugh when this talk of establishing some vast Arab empire is mentioned to them; they laugh at it because it is absurd in itself, and because Egypt, which expended such effort to achieve the independence of the Sudan, is not the nation that dreams of founding empires at this very time when great empires are collapsing. But the reality is that very many people in the West believe in this absurdity; politics has corrupted their thinking, so that they no longer distinguish between the possible and the impossible, and we have no choice but to resist this widespread absurdity with the same strength and the same resolve with which we resist colonialism. How I wish that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would attend to this matter on the one hand, the Information Administration on another, and the press and broadcasting on yet another. We must reach the point of making Western peoples aware that their statesmen are misleading them and lying to them, and that Egypt covets nothing, near her borders or far from them, and wants only to live in dignity and honor, respected by herself and by others, and to see the nations around her live a life founded upon honor and dignity; for Egypt has never sought advantage for herself alone, and in demanding that rights be restored to their rightful owners in Algeria and elsewhere, she desires for her fellow men only what she desires for herself, answering thereby to that selflessness innate in her nature, and to what the Qur'an and the Gospel call for.