

MILESTONES ALONG THE ROAD

When we speak of new responsibilities in our lives after October, we should record that we are not starting from a void. We have a rich experience behind us which we should study scrupulously, and pinpoint all that is positive in order to develop and add to it, and what is negative and impedes our movement in order to rid ourselves thereof.

Our people could not have lived the experience of defeat and victory, without deriving from it elements to change their lives towards what is better for the great majority. But this change should not be a leap into the unknown, or a retreat backward, or dispersed among contradictory efforts. We should know exactly where we stand and where we are heading to.

We should fix our objectives, and point out the milestones along our road on a frank, well-defined and clear base.

In order to know where we stand and where we are heading to, we should stand and ask ourselves a major question which the youths of this

generation, in particular, are more in need of finding a clear answer to. This question is : how can we view the past and how can we view the future ?

The history of progressing nations is one of connected and not one of intermittent links.

The nations which deny their history and the struggle of their successive generations are nations unworthy of their heritage. Moreover, by so doing they forfeit many of the fruits of their labour, and do not provide the rising generations with sufficient incentives to proceed along their paths and to shoulder their new responsibilities.

However, this should not stand in the way of scrutinising the past with a clear, perceptive eye; yet the scrutiny should be based on honest criticism and sound analysis, and not on rancour which only sets out to destroy and not to build.

We, the people of Egypt in particular, being one of those nations which take pride in their long and distinguished history, characterised by the elements of continuity which have stood firm over the centuries in the face of ordeals and changes, and which have absorbed all blows while retaining their genuine essence and their deep-rooted civilisational characteristics... We of all people should be more prone to assess our history on the basis of its ne-

gatives and positives, to look upon it with a constructive and not a destructive eye; and to take as our starting point the previous gains achieved by the national struggle to project forward into new horizons.

In this context, the July 23 Revolution, which I had the honour of participating in its preparatory stages, of shouldering the danger of the proclamation of its establishment, and of being one of those responsible for the battles it waged, was and will remain one of the most important events which altered the course of life in Egypt since many centuries.

Whereas the new generations regard the achievements, fruits and firmly-entrenched principles of the Revolution as facile matters which they take for granted, this was not the case when this Revolution was fermented on Egyptian soil according to Egypt's circumstances, and then set forth to change Egypt's life style. This was done in the face of difficulties which, though they may appear negligible to the rising generations, yet this is because the preceding generation was able to fight them and to confront their dangers with great courage until it overcame them.

Egypt lived for centuries under two fixed regimes though they may have appeared under dif-

ferent shapes and varying guises: the feudalist regime and the imperialist regime.

Until the end of World War II, and despite the repeated national revolutions and upheavals, these two regimes remained in one form or another defining the type of social relations in Egypt, the forms of economic activity, the class which held all the wealth resulting from the toil of all the people, and the limited power of the people to direct their policy. And there was always an incessant and sharp national struggle.

However, Egypt entered the second half of the twentieth century with all doors appearing to be locked before it. The British were still in Egypt after eighty years of occupation; political freedom was just a matter of form; social problems were worsening as a result of the increase in population, the much too ambitious aspirations and the lack of any thought for development. The traditional political parties were incapable of absorbing any new ideas and the formation or dismissal of any Egyptian Cabinet depended on the directives of the British Ambassador. It was inevitable that extremist trends should appear from all directions, and that strong dissensions should take root among the

ranks of the people threatening acute splits in the national fabric.

Then the July 23 Revolution flared up breaking this vicious circle, and opening new vistas for national action.

Egypt's land was liberated for the first time since ages from foreign authority, and for the first time after two thousand years, the Egyptian people were ruled by their own sons.

Throughout the years historical measures have succeeded each other: the Agrarian Reform Law, the nationalisation of the Suez Canal, the setting up of the public sector, the mapping out of development projects, the establishment of hundreds of factories, and the creation of a socialist State suited to our heritage, circumstances and reality. Fundamentally it is the State which regards itself responsible for all its sons, the weak and the strong, responsible for giving them equal opportunities, securing their right to work, providing them with social services, insurance, and medical care. We will not stop until all services are widened to include every citizen.

What the citizens today regard as a natural right, to demand from the State in all fields ranging from education, to work opportunities, to

improved services was non-existent before and was never on the mind of the authorities nor was it considered one of their responsibilities.

What the citizens see today as to the great number of experts, technicians, industrial workers and directors, and the hundreds of factories producing thousands of commodities, and in the successive development programmes, were non-existent before, and were never on the mind of the authorities, nor were they considered among their responsibilities.

If we note today that the people's demands and aspirations are increasing, and their growing awareness of the need to call to account the public sector, public utilities and public services, that is because the State since the Revolution — and the social services it introduced — has placed itself in this new position of responsibility on behalf of society. This is one of the important factors of the transformation which took place, for he who makes himself responsible also exposes himself to criticism.

The July 23 Revolution transferred our country from one age to another, and changed the social map of Egypt positively and radically, creating major social powers which were not in existence before, or else their presence was marginal, unclear and unfelt.

It was natural that this should be coupled with greater aspirations by all sectors of the people, after stepping forward from stagnancy to motion, and from isolation to positive participation. But this was part of the price of progress, its consequences which we should face and its new responsibility which we should shoulder. For he who places himself and his thoughts within the framework of the past loses all contact with the picture of the new social phase in Egypt, and thus becomes unable to genuinely participate in comprehending the future.

We had to confront a number of revolutions appearing concomitantly, blowing over all the developing countries at one and the same time, and not coming consecutively over a long epoch of time, as was the case with the countries which preceded us to progress. These were revolutions for : national independence, social justice, the transformation from an agricultural to an industrial society, science and technology, the means of communication and modern knowledge which has caused every citizen to feel that he is entitled to share in the fruits of human progress, however remote or far his country may be.

Our Revolution had to face all this and to drive society forward, without meanwhile exposing it to

the bloody divisions which afflicted other nations as they were passing through this stage.

We can say that the July 23 Revolution has realised — throughout all this — numerous objectives with minimal losses; within the framework of the three continents to which we belong our achievements are still in the fore.

In my opinion, it is very important — while we are on the threshold of determining where we are and to where we are heading — to record that the ultimate success of the Revolution, any revolution, is when it is transformed into order and stability.

It is in the nature of revolutions while undertaking a process of acute and necessary change in society, to be accompanied by many exceptional and unavoidable procedures. For a revolution is not a daily occurrence, it is an exceptional event which becomes inevitable when its *raison d'être* is at hand, the motives for its being have accumulated and all other forms of change have been blocked to the masses. Consequently, it is an event which deals with various interests, opinions, backgrounds and relations, and which takes place in the midst of the dense dust enveloping the process of tearing down, building up, prospecting and repairing.

Whatever the successes of the Revolution, its ultimate success is the realisation of its goals. It comes at the time when the dust settles, revealing the new building, when the people begin to feel that the features of its institutions have begun to take shape, that its general laws have been crystallised, that its basic principles have become part of the national conscience, and that the new political, social and economic relations are on their way to stability.

By such means, the Revolution reaches the shore of safety. At such a time it becomes a way of life and a predominant set of values and principles which derive their stability from their internal structure, self co-ordination and their embracing of the movement and hopes of the people; not from exceptional measures to protect the Revolution.

This does not mean that all the problems of the people have been solved and their requirements fulfilled. The exigencies of every society and its problems develop from day to day *ad infinitum*, thus needing constant activity to face them. But it means that we have apprehended the milestones along the road and laid down the springboards from which we can move to solve these problems and exigencies.

Likewise this does not mean that we have imposed rigid frameworks not liable to development, for this would be opposed to the laws of life itself. Each one of us will still hold his views as to the changing circumstances, and will maintain his own concepts; but discussion, interaction and arriving at resolutions now proceed along well-defined, stable channels. Even the changing of laws has its constitutional procedures, as happens in other world communities.

Here I can say that the rectification movement was nourished by this feeling that the Revolution had attained the stage of order and stability. Thus its essence was : withdrawing all forms of exceptional measures, and ensuring stability of laws, rules, institutions and relations within a clearcut framework, known beforehand to the citizens through which they can exercise their political, economic and social activities so as to develop their life continually.

If after answering the question : where are we, I would like to answer the other part of the question: to where are we heading, I would say that we should move in two directions :

First : Clear our national experiment of all negative aspects which mar it or impede its drive.

Second : We should co-ordinate between the national action movement and the new circumstances in which we — and the world around us — are living.

As for the first trend, I would like first and foremost to repeat what I have said several times : that I was a partner in the responsibility of what happened in Egypt since July 23, 1952 until now. From this position of responsibility I exercise self-criticism of the experiment with satisfaction, because of my deep faith that the outcome of the experiment is utterly positive and my confidence that our national progressive system has been deeply rooted in the minds of the people, so much so that no honest and objective criticism could affect it. On the contrary, it provides it with power and vitality thus making it more capable of facing the great tasks awaiting our people which they have been looking forward to. In this respect, I can admit that our great achievements were, sometimes, enveloped in gloomy clouds owing to the suspension of the sovereignty of the law and the shortcomings of political democracy. The Charter stated :

« Democracy is political freedom, and socialism is social freedom; we cannot separate the one from the other, for they are the wings of real freedom;

and without them freedom cannot hover over tomorrow's anticipated horizons. »

Whereas the Revolution has accomplished so much in the field of social freedom, we must honestly concede that political freedom has not run the course the people wanted. Centres of power and other bodies rather imposed their custody on the masses and several restrictions and measures ensued. This went to the extent of diverting measures of social conversion from their original humanitarian target and exploiting them to fulfil personal rancours and satisfy the interests of certain groups.

On the pretext of defending socialism and State security alternatively, many doors were then shut, and roads blocked before national action. It is the right of every citizen to feel safe and secure, as to his freedom of opinion, his job and legitimate livelihood. It is essentially required to assume every citizen honest until the judiciary proves, in application of the law, that he has committed an error injuring another or society.

Our people are of full age and intelligent, requiring no trusteeship from anyone. That is why I worked with great perseverance to liquidate the centres of power, to realise the sovereignty of the

law, establish the State of institutions and secure the present and future of every citizen.

I believe political freedom has no significance to the hungry who is forced to sell his vote in elections. But I also believe in the futility of being able to earn one's bread while losing political freedom which is the prerogative of every man.

Today and after the victory scored in October, after national unity of rank has been affirmed and the citizens have risen to the level of responsibility, we must underline the significance of political freedom side by side with social freedom.

Therefore, I took my decision to lift the censorship on the press. We do not fear difference of opinion, nor are we perturbed by free debate and expression of the various interests of the working forces, so long as these orbit in the legal circuits which we accept and so long as they aim at serving the objectives of Egypt and the Egyptian people. We are boldly embarking on liquidating the restrictions clamped on freedom, impelled by confidence in the masses and in their exceptional national awareness. We want to get rid of all the aspects that express doubt in the individual citizen and infringe on his humanity and honour, or those that compel Egypt to be uncharacteristically introverted.

However, let it be clear that we are building, not destroying ; correcting, not smashing ; developing and reinforcing everything that is positive, and liquidating all that is negative. We are exposing errors without exaggeration, rejecting all attempts at spotlighting the negative aspects only, thus obscuring the bright sides of the picture.

Our youths are entitled in particular to grasp this objective assessment of the experience to know exactly the achievements realised by our generation; to know what efforts we have exerted and to realise the shortcomings that have faced national action, so as to take up with conviction their place in the forefront of the movement of national action instead of being torn apart by currents that try to deny the experience, in part and in whole.

Concerning the second trend, that is co-ordinating between the national action movement and the new circumstances in which we and the whole world are living, I would like to say that the method of national action must change and conform to the changes in the circumstances facing it, while simultaneously adhering to the essential principles accepted and agreed upon by the people. Now in 1974 we have to take into consideration many changes that have been witnessed by our country, our Arab area and by the world at large. If our

Main programme is the freedom of national will in taking decisions and formulating the future, the effective practice of this freedom entails accurate calculation of all circumstances surrounding us to decide for ourselves what can effectively achieve our aims in construction and progress. I believe that the starting point here is the changes that have taken place here in Egypt, for we no longer receive negatively the results of foreign changes. The Great October has opened a new era that could enable Egypt to influence, in its turn, evolution in the area and would further enable it together with the other Arab countries to affect and influence world policy.

We must not forget for a moment that Egypt, ✓ is an economic, political and military power to be taken into consideration and reckoned with. Egypt also enjoys a stable political, economic and social system which experience has burnished. This system has proved itself capable of facing events and comprehending the facts of the age and the aspirations of humanity towards peace, prosperity and co-operation.

Egypt, with what it has achieved so far in the field of development and what it can achieve in the next few years, with all its human potentialities, its geographical position and cultural progress,

stands as a principal economic lode-star in Africa and the Middle East. The Egyptian Armed Forces, with the experience they have gained, the battle they have fought and the standard they have reached, have become capable of projecting the objectives of national action and deterring every aggressor. For all those reasons we have to brush all fear-complexes aside and deal with the whole world in self-confidence, trusting our capacity to maintain our political and economic independence and to preserve an accepted social system while expanding our range of acquaintances with everyone expressing a desire to cooperate with us.

We extend a hand of co-operation while standing in a position of power not of feebleness, of confidence and not of fear.

All the good intentions which we expressed before October have remained limited in their effect. But today the picture has changed after Egypt has proved what it is capable of doing. This change should be taken into account.

Also the reality of the Arab nation has changed. The Arabs succeeded for the first time in joining ranks effectively, and agreeing jointly on definite actions, notwithstanding any political or social differences. The battle has proved to the

Arabs the value of their natural resources and wealth, underlining this value not merely for conversion to money but as a necessary weapon for negotiations with all parties and as a means of facilitating the fast moving pan-Arab progress.

The Arabs' natural wealth has become a source of power to them after having once been a cause for covetousness and greed from the rest of the world. The idea of Arab nationalism has at the same time matured, emerging from the framework of enthusiastic slogans which gave rise to much controversy, to a trend towards possible practical measures despite disagreement over many other issues. Egypt being the heart of the Arab nation has to bear its responsibility in preserving, consolidating and promoting that constructive tendency, particularly in the field of economic co-operation.

Political unity as an ultimate aim has not lost its value, but perhaps the most important thing that we have to realise today is that the road to that political unity may be long. We have to follow that road and not spare any opportunity for co-operation without exploiting it. We also have to benefit from the experience of other nations to the effect that interrelated economic interests constitute the material bases for every successful political

unity. That which is certain and which must be realised is that economic co-operation can bear fruit and can be furthered despite differing political and social systems. To reject that co-operation in order to leap forward hastily to the supreme objective only leads to deepening divisions.

We are also living through the age of the upsurge of the Third World countries which want to occupy a place under the sun, as they comprise more than two-thirds of humanity. If the sixties of this century, after Bandung, pointed to the epoch of political independence with no more than a few imperialist pockets remaining where the peoples are struggling for liberation, then the seventies constitute the epoch of the attempt to deepen political independence. It is the epoch for achieving economic independence, seeking ways and means for close co-operation among the countries that face the complex problems of development, and that know today that the solution to these problems entails effort and sweat, and requires solidarity in the face of the strong and the rich in this world.

The developing countries have begun, after the October War, to feel that they possess the elements of a power manifest in their resources and raw materials. They have also started since then to feel that their voice in international society has to be

listened to, their destiny determined by themselves and not by resolutions taken without their knowledge or presence.

The first thing that affects us in the movement of the developing world is the movement of sister African countries. We belong to that continent and Egypt has long struggled to bring its states solidarity, and helped establish the Organisation of African Unity. The African states which are members of the Arab League encompass more than one third of the population of Africa. Therefore, the ties linking us are numerous, and our interests are common interests.

Egypt will not forget Africa's stand beside it and must respond to the hand of co-operation extended to it by the African peoples and must take its natural place among them.

The non-aligned countries group which Egypt helped to found are mainly composed of the Third World countries. They have — as a whole — rendered us support and we derive power from their movement. We share their hopes in realising speedy development, getting fair terms in dealings with the rich countries, and having the group's voice heard in international affairs. God has guided us successfully to close the ranks of the Islamic coun-

tries — which are all members of the Third World group of States — at the Lahore Conference around the Arab cause and for the promotion of co-operation among them. All this means that we belong to major groupings in the world representing the majority of mankind which share our hopes, in which we find our support and with which we must co-operate.

Finally, the movement of the world community has emerged from the atmosphere of the cold war and its subsequent restrictions and limitations. International relations have been launched on a stage of full scale reformation. West Europe is trying to unite its word to form an economic and political power in order to make up for the losses of its individual states in their stature as big powers. Japan, after its enormous economic success, is now entering the arena of international policy. Eastern and Western European countries are working for the liquidation of differences among them, and are preparing for a conference to lay down the foundations for a European security accord.

China has emerged from the isolation imposed on it and taken its position as one of the five big powers in the Security Council. The Soviet Union and the United States have proclaimed that they

have replaced the confrontation policy with a policy of negotiations. They have not only cast off cold war tactics but have gone to the extent of coordinating political and economic co-operation between them and agreeing on joint solutions to the most important international questions.

We have to locate and define our position within these new international relations.

It must be amply clear that the most lethal danger threatening a country under such circumstances is to fall within the spheres of influence. On the contrary, a country like Egypt, is today capable of extending international lines of cooperation into various directions and of utilising all the opportunities afforded by the new international situation, well aware that our own strength as well as our Arab ties and African relations and our affiliation to the non-aligned nations movement are basic weapons in our hands for the protection of our interests and rights, enabling us to prevent any agreement that could be reached at our expense.

For us the case is, therefore, the development of national action to get rid of negative aspects and to benefit from the changes.

Hence the need for this document which defines the milestones along the road.

Fear befell those who alleged that we wanted to annul the Charter or go back on our socialism.

The documents of the Revolution do not revoke, but supplement, each other. I said in my speech on September 28 last that I believe in socialism and that it is the only solution to the problem of progress. The basic principles of the Charter have become an intrinsic part of our Permanent Constitution and no one can amend it, except through lengthy procedures and after a popular referendum.

Article I of the Constitution states that Egypt has a democratic and socialist system based on the alliance of the working forces of the people.

Article IV reaffirms that the economic base of the Arab Republic of Egypt is the socialist system based on sufficiency and justice in such a way as to prevent exploitation and aiming at liquidating class differences.

Article XXVI stipulates the rights of workers in management and profits.

Article XXXVII protects the Agrarian Reform measures.

Article XXX provides for the consolidation of the public sector and affirms that it leads to pro-

gress in all spheres and bears the main responsibility in the development plan.

We reject the call for stagnation in the guise of adherence to principles. It is we who have set our principles and we who are capable of their adequate application in conformity with the new circumstances. But we reject, with the same force, the call to abandon the principles accepted by our people on the pretext of the change of circumstances. Basic principles do not change with the change of circumstances, otherwise they would not have risen to the level of principles. It is only the application which should be changed and this is what we are doing.

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