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THE LAST PASHA

An Egyptian in Transition

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Revolutions usually have a historic moment, a day of triumph and overthrow that eventually assumes in the national myth an importance it probably does not merit. This is because, as revolutionary time passes, one is increasingly tempted to think of the great day as a moment of great change, the precipitous divide separating an older social system from a new one that suddenly—so the myth has it—appears full-blown. But what may seem precipitous is often, of course, the gentlest of watersheds; revolutionary mythology obscures the continuities, the rugged bonds of tradition that tie one era to the next. Because the agents of continuity are people, what follows is a sketch of a life that in a small way links two regimes and demonstrates Egyptian bondage to the pre-revolutionary past. By altering the particulars, I have made it utterly impossible to identify the individual concerned, but the spirit is, I think, accurately rendered.

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Though he calls himself the last pasha, he means it only as a mild pleasantry—or perhaps, with foreigners, as a helpful bit of social explanation. The title was never actually conferred: the Revolution of 1952 intervened and the titles of "pasha" and "bey" (first and second degree) were abolished. But it is true, as confirmed by later conversations at the Gezira Club with friends who had been involved in palace politics, that one of the last royal decisions had been to make him a pasha, and he chooses to entertain himself and others with this fact.

I shall call him Hamed Bey. The title "bey" (first degree) was

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given him in 1949 when he was an undersecretary in one of the better ministries but almost any adult male with upper-class connections would today get the same title by social courtesy, whether or not it had been officially granted. The higher title "pasha" is socially more distinctive, because it is nowadays used only for those who actually did receive it by royal signature. Hamed Bey makes nothing of his pre-1952 status as an official bey—it would be most unseemly to do so—but his half jest about being the last pasha hides, I suspect, something of a wish that the Revolution had been delayed a few months.

Unlike many of his age and class, however Hamed Bey does not think the Revolution could have been avoided or even long delayed. "We were all fools," he told me once, "and it would have been impossible to change our foolish class mind quickly enough to cope with the new world around us. But the biggest fool was the king; he crystallized our silliness by refusing to budge, and whatever chance there was of turning the Wafd into a reformist political party was destroyed by his desire for absolute power and his reliance on the army." Indeed, the king made the army everything, and it was the army that finally turned on him and threw him out Though Hamed continued to serve the government after 1952, he soon came to know that the new regime would use him for only a while—he was tainted by his class, by his wealth, and probably by the Wafd Party. Sure enough, in early 1958 he was relieved of his post as director of an important government program; no explanation was offered him, and none was really necessary. The plain fact was that, like other upper-class liberals of his generation, he had been born at the wrong time.

Hamed was born in 1910 of what in those days was considered mixed parentage. His father was a wealthy Egyptian landowner, and his mother was a Circassian, a descendant of that group from the Caucasus whose ethnic occupation used to be soldiering. Nowadays one does not usually bother to distinguish between Egyptian and Circassians (who are often called "Turks"), but in those days Hamed's mother was thought to have married beneath herself. She had, in fact, done rather well: aside from his wealth, Hamed's father was an unusually handsome and talented man who ultimately became one of Egypt's most respected political leaders. In the early 1920's, as Hamed was becoming aware of the world of affairs, his father was playing a key role in the founding of the Wafd Party and beginning a political association that would lead him some 15 years later to the important ministries of the land. When his father died during World War II—just before reaching the political peaks—Hamed's grief was immense. His admiration for his father knew few bounds, and in the very few intimate moments they had had

together, he had found him gay and charming and tremendously exciting to be with. His father's most important legacy was a reputation for utter personal integrity; and in a country that sets great store by family tradition, it was assumed—quite rightly—that Hamed's character was made of the same stuff.

Hamed and his younger sister went to schools attended by others of their class. Hamed started at the Frères and did his secondary schooling at the Jésuites, and his sister went to similar Roman Catholic institutions for girls. This did not mean that the family was Roman Catholic—in fact, the family tradition was thoroughly Moslem—but it did mean that the best and most fashionable education of those times (as, in some respects, of these) was in the hands of French-speaking clerics. One of the rules at these schools was a strictly enforced regulation that French should be spoken at all times on the school grounds, and Hamed grew up speaking as much French to his closest friends as he did Arabic. Wiser than many, his father insisted that Hamed take special lessons in classical Arabic from a young Azhar graduate, whose knowledge of Arabic was as complete as his ignorance of much else; and simultaneously and crucially, his father instilled in him the desire to be proud of controlling his national language—a desire not instilled by the Jesuit fathers at school. But his sister went the way of other girls of good family: her education was as Western as possible—French, English, piano, extended trips to Europe—and though she handled the spoken language with considerable aplomb, her ability to read Arabic never progressed much beyond simple front-page news.

With many of his classmates from the Jésuites, Hamed entered the Faculty of Law at Fouad University in 1928. He distinguished himself easily enough. Not only were his upper-class connections quite clear to everybody who counted, but he also looked the part of the handsome aristocrat. Naturally intelligent, he had the further advantage of being well grounded in the Faculty's two languages. At the end of his first year he received the over-all mark of "Very Good" for his work; and in subsequent years, his competitive instincts now fully in play, he received over-all marks of "Excellent." As a matter of course, he soon joined the student Wafd organization, of which, if only because of his father's position in the party, he would have been an important member; but in fact he demonstrated a talent for leadership all his own and even became, for a short period, the group's undisputed spokesman. He withdrew from this prominent position—in those days student political leaders could be nationally prominent—when in his third year of law school the student group was at the point of disagreeing with the national Wafd organization on a matter having to do with demonstrations.

Before the disagreement came to a head, his father had called him into his study, a book-lined room associated in his mind with paternal authority, and asked him not to say anything publicly that would cast doubts on their family solidarity. Perhaps because it was not demanded but asked, Hamed consented instantly, retired from student politics, and turned his energies toward more substantive matters.

In his last year of law school, Hamed became "intrigued with the Egyptian economy"—as he now phrases it. Starting with the land, as any would-be economist must, he began paying weekend visits to his father's two estates in the Delta, bombarding attentive bailiffs with questions, and seeking to understand the details of the system. He asked his father for the use of two acres in order to experiment with vegetables as cash crops, and his father was delighted to comply. He shepherded the family cotton crop from its harvest to the port of Alexandria and watched as the bales steamed off to European mills. He spent happy hours learning about the Alexandrian cotton market and frequenting family friends whose lives were intricately involved in the market's machinery. His studies suffered somewhat from this outside activity, but not his marks: he had already established himself as a good student and with a minimum of effort was able to maintain his academic reputation among the faculty. His thoughts turned increasingly toward further study of matters closer to his heart, and it was a surprise to none of his friends that he decided—with his father's consent—to study économie politique at the Sorbonne.

The news of his departure was the occasion of considerable disress for his mother, who understood little of what went on outside Cairo and saw no reason whatsoever for leaving what she considered to be the center of things. For her, the world of politics and economics did not exist; what she recognized as all-important was social position, and until Hamed—in loving exasperation—was able to explain the trip to Paris as a new kind of necessity for social advancement, she refused to be comforted. Her grief made Hamed realize what he was leaving, and he felt the thrill of challenge as he contemplated living in a strange and anonymous land, where the social accreditation he had taken for granted in Egypt would count for nothing at all.

His three years in Paris resulted in no diplomas, but they did provide a superabundance of information and experience. Soon after arrival, he abandoned the idea of working toward any degree—there was none to fit the needs of a young Egyptian expecting to become a competent high-level bureaucrat—and it is to his considerable credit that during his three-year stay he conscientiously followed a program of courses and studies that gave him, without academic recognition,

the kind of preparation he thought necessary for himself. On the few occasions that he was tempted to be less strict with himself, he was kept up to scratch by a man he admired enormously, a professor of economics, who had taken an interest in Hamed and had originally helped him work out his program of study. In less academic spheres, the social challenge of Parisian anonymity was less than he had expected; indeed, rather than struggling for social recognition, he found himself both bemused and enchanted by social liberation. He experienced the sudden freedom of the foreigner in an impersonal city; socially responsible to no one, he made friends as he pleased, lived where he pleased, loved whom he pleased. He came to recognize the restricting conventions of Cairo society for what they were, and for the first and probably the last time in his life he lived with a woman who was his intellectual equal. In the student swirl of ideas he flirted with concepts that would have outraged his peers at Fouad University, but his radicalism was exploratory and temporary. When his program of study was completed, the professor of economics earnestly told him that he must go home, and so he wrenched himself away from much that he had come to cherish and returned to Egypt.

He returned to the Egypt of 1935, a country whose educated classes admired the British tremendously—and wanted them to leave as soon as possible. Hamed's father was deep in the anti-royalist and anti-British Wafdist intrigues that were to lead to the elections of 1936 and to a new treaty with Britain. But he was not so deeply immersed that he was not glad to see his son return; he was, in fact, delighted both personally and politically. On the personal level, he found Hamed mature and steady, and when Hamed found the rare moment to tell of what he had left behind, the older man's heart and mind reached out and he even found the right words to say that he understood. On the political level, Hamed's father saw in his son an absolutely trustworthy political henchman, a competent *alter ego* to take burdens from tiring shoulders. This hope of filial assistance soon foundered, however, on the rock of Hamed's desire to make his own way in the bureaucracy. He never, of course, made his own way completely—he was known to be his father's son—but after his father had helped in securing his first appointment in the Ministry of Agriculture, Hamed never consciously used his father's influence.

Hamed was a success in the bureaucracy. Not only was he a hard worker, he was also willing to suffer bureaucratic frustration without becoming discouraged. He soon learned the ministry's inner workings and mastered the system of paperwork to the point of understanding how it could be considerably simplified. His dedication, so-

phistication, and connections made him a "comer," and within a few years he was appointed the minister's chef de cabinet. A later position made him responsible for the ministry's training program; and after a careful survey Hamed was convinced, despite his French background, that the ministry should have its agricultural engineers and economists trained in the United States, a conviction that was to become a ministry tradition. He left his imprint elsewhere as well—on matters of experimental farming, on matters of the shift from basin to perennial irrigation, on matters of policy with respect to Sudanese use of the waters of the Nile.

Meanwhile, the war had come, and with it the crushing blow of his father's death. Allied troops crowded the streets of Cairo, and Rommel threatened from the desert. The social pace of upper-class Cairo was frantic, and without his father in the house, Hamed found little time to be at home. His mother pursued her social interests and was apparently content; his younger sister had married and gone to Alexandria, where he sometimes saw her during the summer months. The anti-Britishness inherited from his Wafdist father took on a new dimension when one day in 1942 the British Ambassador arrived at the palace with an escort of tanks and demanded a change of government; that the new government was to be the anti-Axis Wafd, the only party to which he felt loyalty, did nothing to moderate Hamed's sense of utter humiliation, and he got in touch with the Wafd organization to let it be known that he now considered himself a politician as well as a public servant.

With the end of the war, as anti-British incidents accumulated, the tension mounted. Anglo-Egyptian negotiations of various kinds were failures, but the British did withdraw their troops to the Canal Zone in order to avoid reminding Egyptian nationalists of the occupation. Hamed was busy both politically and bureaucratically, becoming increasingly useful to the liberal wing of the Wafd and being promoted to the rank of undersecretary in the Ministry of Agriculture. When Egyptian troops moved into Palestine in 1948, Hamed—like other Egyptians—expected quick victory in a just cause, and the defeat administered by the Israelis was another humiliation. In the search for an explanation, most eyes turned to Farouk because the army was known as the king's instrument, and in due course the story of the defective ammunition purchased by the king began to eat away at the foundations of royal prestige. In his relations with foreign friends, Hamed concealed his disgust with the monarchy and its army and vented his wrath on Great Britain and the United States; in his relations with the Wafd, he became increasingly identified with the party's liberals who were de-

manding, in addition to the free elections sought by all Wafdists, measures of social reform that would once again make the Wafd a truly national party, one representing more than the interests of the upper class. The elections of January 1950 brought the Wafd into power, but though the liberals got several ministries, the control of the party remained in conservative hands. Hamed was made a deputy minister in another ministry.

What followed was the disintegration of the Egyptian polity. Hamed recalls the feeling of helplessness as chaos became each day's normal expectation. The party's conservative leadership turned the Wafd into a royal ally—anything, apparently, to stay in power and avoid dismissal by king and army—and the party's public face, despite the new look of a few ministries, became increasingly confused with that of Farouk. Hamed and some others urged gestures in the direction of land reform, but such suggestions were always held up to ridicule on the grounds of unreality: because the monarchy owned one-fourth the land, such radicalism would be considered treasonous. Meanwhile the Muslim Brotherhood and the Communists and the Socialists were gathering strength and staging demonstrations and riots—the only form of political expression open to them—and the king began the dangerous game of staging demonstrations and deaths of his own. Suddenly it was apparent that the army officer corps was no longer the king's personal weapon, for the humiliation of Palestine had grown into sturdy anti-royalist loyalties. Public authority was slipping away. In a desperate bid for support from students and from the street—both were now key sources of power—the Wafd intensified its anti-Britishness by abrogating the existing treaty with the United Kingdom and initiating a campaign of guerrilla warfare against the British forces in the Canal Zone.

In the midst of this uncertainty, Hamed bowed to his mother's wishes and married a girl of good family. His mother had been agitating for some time, and indeed Hamed liked the girl, who was a second cousin on his mother's side and some fifteen years his junior. Like others whom he might have married, the girl had completed secondary school and knew three languages, but her interests did not extend far beyond selected persons in Cairo, Alexandria, and Europe. She was very pretty and she was in love with Hamed. In many ways, Hamed treated her like a child, and the national crisis that had to come was never a matter for discussion between them. Even after Black Saturday, that day in January 1952 when Cairo burned and violence reigned, he did not feel she would understand the significance of it all and protected her from the knowledge that the old order was toppling.

The consolation was that his reputation for integrity remained intact. It was known that he had been on the liberal and losing side of the struggle within the party, and it was known that he was politically and bureaucratically incorruptible. When the Wafdist bubble finally burst on Black Saturday, Farouk dismissed the government and declared a state of emergency. In the technicians' cabinets that followed, Hamed took various ministries despite his Wafdist associations, his honesty momentarily serving the royal purposes; and as anarchy increased, so ironically did Hamed's reputation as a virtuous public servant. Perhaps because the king sought credit for rewarding virtue, the palace made the decision that Hamed should be a pasha, but the coup d'état of July 1952 occurred a few weeks too soon.

When the coup occurred, Hamed and his wife were staying with his sister—following its custom, the government was in Alexandria for the summer season—and Hamed made a point of being in his office the following day. He wrote out his resignation, stating his willingness to revert to his civil service status of undersecretary whenever officially relieved as minister, and then he began the more difficult task of determining the identity of his responsible superior. He finally selected a competent young bureaucrat in his office and sent him off with instuctions to deliver the resignation to "appropriate authority." The man returned some 30 hours later with the resignation still in hand, but on it was scrawled the following: "Seen. Appreciated. Information to follow. Thanks. Mohammed Naguib." The information to follow came the next day in the form of a young officer who stated he had been sent by General Naguib to ask Hamed to stay on until things became clearer. The officer was enthusiastically full of other information as well: Hamed plied him with coffee and questions about the coup and suddenly recognized in himself an enormous sense of relief that the crisis had come and the king had gone.

The Revolution Command Council, which was the executive of the Free Officers who engineered the coup, soon asked Aly Maher to form a government, and Hamed was not asked to be a member of the cabinet. As soon as he was replaced in office, he took a complete holiday, and he and his wife went off to one of the almost isolated beaches west of Alexandria. Upon his return to Cairo in early September, he submitted a letter to the Ministry of Agriculture, asking for assignment at his old civil service rank, but it was not until Naguib himself had become prime minister and an agrarian reform law had been promulgated that Hamed received an answer. The answer was again in the form of a visit from a young officer, who this time requested Hamed to appear before the prime minister the following day. When he followed these instructions, Hamed found some ten men in uniform lounging in various corners of

the office, and he soon realized he was being interviewed not only by the gray-haired prime minister but by the others—all slightly younger than himself—as well. He had met none of them before, but he recognized two, perhaps three, as having been on the fringes of his social world. The interview was conducted as a conversation about the agrarian reform law, concerning which Hamed (despite a not inconsiderable loss of land) was genuinely pleased, and about the future of Egypt. Hamed confined his part in the conversation to comments on practical steps to improve existing ways of doing things—how to increase agricultural production, how to achieve greater bureaucratic efficiency, how to develop cadres of competent public servants. At some signal that Hamed did not catch, the prime minister broke in to say: "All of us here are anxious that you accept a special job we have in mind—we are asking you because you are competent and because, above all, you are honest." The prime minister then named one of Egypt's key nonministerial posts.

Of course Hamed accepted, and with the acceptance came a sudden gladness that new people were making a fresh start. He liked what he saw of the new people gathered in that room. Already there was the evidence of the land reform law that they could act quickly and decisively, and on the conversational surface they seemed earnest and sensible. Later, he even tried to explain his feelings to his wife, but she had been severely shocked by their loss of land and thought his enthusiasm somewhat peculiar. His wife's reaction was instructive: in front of old friends he defended the new regime, but at social gatherings he curbed his outward enthusiasm. He noted that a good few of his friends—perhaps those with less land—needed little convincing and were as intrigued with the new faces, and as refreshed by them, as he was. The new job was a taxing one, but he went at it with great dedication, and he seemed to enjoy complete cabinet support for the reforms he initiated. Then one day, in early 1953, he had a visit from a Wafdist friend at whose side he had fought the good liberal fight within the party. After a long conversation on the place of the Wafd in the new scheme of things, the friend had to ask if Hamed still considered himself a member. The question brought Hamed up short, and it forced him to a new political assessment of himself. When he finally answered, he felt constrained to say that his loyalties to the Wafd seemed to have been greatly weakened by events and that in all fairness he should now be considered a public servant only. To himself he admitted that his loyalties had, in fact, shifted to the new group.

With the Liberation Rally, the new group launched a kind of political party of its own and served notice of a disinclination to permit political influence to other parties, which were officially, though not

actually, dissolved in early 1953. The Wafd began to wither, but the Muslim Brotherhood—perhaps the most powerful of the lot because of its disciplined organization and because so many officers were still members—was temporarily given non-party status. Hamed was asked if he would lend his name to a United Front made up of the harassed parties, but he had no hesitation in refusing; though he wanted a parliamentary government at some time in the future, he did not wish the present atmosphere of accomplishment to be clouded by politics. Reverting to pre-Revolutionary prejudices, he was delighted at the goverment's wholesale arrests of Muslim Brethren in January 1954, but events later in the year were disturbing. Though Hamed was not at all involved, it was impossible not to know of the growing rivalry within the Revolution Command Council. In early March 1954 it was announced that parliamentary life would be totally restored, beginning with elections to a constituent assembly, but the announcement turned out to be just another maneuver of the faction of Gamal Abdel Nasser, who by late March had succeeded in consolidating his power within the officer corps and had pushed Mohammed Naguib into a powerless presidency. The elections were canceled. In April, before forming a cabinet of the victors, Nasser put out a decree that deprived pre-Revolutionary cabinet members of their political rights for ten years; but—as the usual young officer arrived to explain—the decree in no way affected Hamed as a high-ranking public servant, although it did cause him to stop and reflect on the direction of things. In November, Mohammed Naguib abruptly left the presidency and was put under house arrest, and in December, as part of a general effort at greater control, an officer was sent to supervise Hamed's work. Another desk was placed in Hamed's office.

This officer was a pleasant, rather simple major, who was perhaps embarrassed about the matter but pleased to be on a better payroll. Hamed very carefully addressed him by his military rank, and the major—a man of unexalted origins and astonished to find himself supervising an obvious aristocrat—was by turns overfriendly and overobsequious. When Hamed spoke at all sharply, the major would invariably respond in the traditional lower-class affirmative; in other situations he would stubbornly insist on understanding some intricate point, like an influential schoolboy determined to get a high mark. The major once invited Hamed to bring his family to Heliopolis for a social evening, but Hamed, whose wife would have been an unbending total loss in such a situation and was conveniently pregnant with their second child, begged off for all but himself. At the gathering, which was the kind that divided itself firmly into a sitting-room for women and a parlor for men, Hamed found he was the only man without military background—

and he enjoyed himself very much after the first drinks of whiskey permitted the officers a greater degree of informality. Yet, as he looks back over a decade, that evening sticks in his memory as the time of his first suspicion that he, Hamed Bey, might not be allowed to serve the Revolution for long. It was not that the differences between him and the other guests had been insurmountable—the whiskey had done its work well—but there would always be times when he would be a symbol of what had gone before, an unwanted reminder of class traditions, an aggravator of the ache of inferiority.

In August 1955 he was moved to another position at the same civil service rank, but it was a less important job. His wife suggested that he resign and devote his time to the family property—he still had 200 acres of land, extensive investments in Egyptian industry, and several apartment buildings—and he tried, fruitlessly, to explain his duty as a civil servant and his allegiance to what the Revolution was attempting. His successor in his old job was a man perhaps five years younger than Hamed, the highly skilled product of an American doctoral program whose father had been a petty official in the Ministry of Finance—and with whom, clearly, the supervising major would be more at ease. In Hamed's new job there was also a supervising major, who turned out to be the younger brother of one of Hamed's old school friends; but in this instance the social equality that eased personal relations had distinct disadvantages. Hamed was no longer in a naturally dominant situation and could no longer run his own shop. The new major was Nasser's ardent follower and an ambitious and intelligent man; though he had been to French schools, he was neither very wealthy nor unpardonably upper class. In manner the two men were careful of each other, but in any disagreement the major could seldom be converted and usually had his way. Hamed was often discouraged because he felt the wrong decisions were being made, and the new job became more of a chore than a challenge.

Hamed continued to support the new regime. Even in his own social circle this position did not often put him in a minority—the right to keep 200 acres of Egyptian land and the possibilities of industrial investment maintained an atmosphere that was scarcely revolutionary. Many of his friends—especially those professionally trained—were doing well, living almost as they had before and working productively; indeed, only those whose work brought them close to political and bureaucratic power seemed to be feeling any pressure from events. And there was plenty to watch and applaud: the regime's handling of the British led to the withdrawal of British forces from the Canal Zone in the spring of 1956; Nasser proclaimed the nationalization of the Canal

that summer; and in a moment of great national feeling and unity, all Egyptians resisted the military attack of Israel, Great Britain, and France. The policy of international neutrality, which really meant accepting assistance from all, was certainly satisfying and seemed particularly successful after the Soviet Union had agreed to build the High Dam. Hamed's supervising major was transferred to another important job and was not replaced.

When Hamed received notice in 1958 that he was to be put on premature pension, he did not this time have a visit from a young officer. The regime had become too sophisticated for this kind of message-bearing and had, indeed, begun to substitute bits of dogma for what had been an unsophisticated, almost adventurous search for new approaches. Socialist phrases were increasingly used to explain the economic and social future; and though the private sector had not yet been seriously invaded, the day was clearly not far off when all initiative would have to rise miraculously and bureaucratically from a governmental sea of paper plans. As a long-time bureaucrat, Hamed was emotionally in favor of greater governmental initiative and control, but as an experienced and competent bureaucrat he felt that centralized economic development was impractical. He had written a long report on the matter, stating the advisability of encouraging the private sector within the limits of carefully conceived tax and labor regulations, and this report—to Hamed's surprise—was widely circulated not only through several ministries but, apparently, also among some of the nation's military leaders as well. Rumors of heated discussion of the report at the highest level kept coming to him in roundabout ways. Some three months later—Hamed insists there was no relation between the two events—he had word his services would not be required beyond the end of the month.

His wife and his mother were delighted with this turn of events—they apparently thought Hamed would now become acceptably anti-Nasser—but his sister was outraged at the indignity and the injustice. Though Hamed explained the inevitability of this kind of injustice and told her he had anticipated his dismissal for some time, she would not be turned aside. Through her husband, who had become a respected and influential scientist, she succeeded in arranging an interview with one of the top military group and expressed to him her indignation at the cavalier treatment meted out to one whose only wish had been to serve his country as an efficient and honest public servant. The officer listened with embarrassment and sympathy and promised to do something immediately to rectify what he called a bureaucratic mix-up; and when his sister brought this news, Hamed—despite his knowledge

of the realities of things—felt a sudden hope that he might again be taken on in an important position. But of course the whole thing came to nothing. Neither he nor his sister received any message, however indirect, from the officer, and within a few months it was as if the interview had never occurred. His sister tried to arrange another interview but had now success.

Retirement had its compensations. He could now devote more time to his children, whom he found delightful in small doses, and to his lands, which he cherished. He found himself spending an increasing number of hours each day at the Gezira Club. He began the hard and lengthy job of recovering long-lost tennis skills and became reacquainted with many old friends with whom he could now converse at comfortable length. He started playing chess, and what had been a boyhood pastime became an intriguing challenge: he took up buying books on the game and would often spend his evenings with a chessboard in solitary and pleasant anticipation of the next day's opening gambit at the club. And now, too, he had time to read both the political commentary and the modern French literature that had been neglected interests during his busy years. He even tried his hand at writing a novel about Egypt, but he found that in neither French nor Arabic could he find the words he wanted.

Despite the wholesale socialization laws of July 1961, Hamed has continued to live in relative comfort—though certainly on a greatly reduced scale. Three Nubian servants, who have been with the family for years, remain as dependents of the household, but the chauffeur was encouraged to find another job and now works for the British Embassy. The children's nanny will leave next year when the youngest child begins going to school for most of the day. The 1961 laws have left Hamed with 100 acres of land, industrial shares whose theoretical value amounts to 10,000 Egyptian pounds, and three apartment buildings. By virtue of Hamed's management, the land provides a good income, and the buildings are also doing well; but despite official statements about their continuing worth, Hamed has written off the industrial shares. He also expects that within ten years his income from land and buildings will be negligible, but he has never told me his plans for this eventuality. Were he less circumscribed by Egypt, less hurt by memories of success and service, or were he perhaps a bit younger, he might leave the country; but I expect he will somehow stay on—only slightly bitter, always charming, seldom happy. He will always hope, despite himself, that the government will offer him a useful post.

But the government will not be offering Hamed anything. This

is because the new socialist religion decrees that feudalists and exploiting capitalists naturally oppress the people, and by past association Hamed is guilty of feudalism and capitalism—not so guilty that he could not be a doctor or a scientist or even an economist, but much too guilty to be a civil servant with the powerful rank of undersecretary. Whenever I see Hamed at the club, using his talent and his energy in the pursuit of a better game of tennis or chess, I am reminded that dogma is a poor substitute for reason: what an unreasoning waste of a considerable human resource! The regime may believe it has a corner on dedication to the nation's masses—and certainly this belief is partially substantiated by what many members of Hamed's social class have done in the past—but Hamed Bey, for one, is as dedicated and as patriotic as any other Egyptian.

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