

CAIRO TO DAMASCUS

JOHN ROY CARLSON

CAIRO
TO
DAMASCUS

19  51
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TO
MARIE
WHO STOOD BY LOYALLY
THROUGHOUT THE STORMY YEARS: 1947-51



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FIRST EDITION

PREFACE



IT seems to me there are two ways, generally speaking, to prepare a book, take a trip, or, for that matter, to live a life. One may go at it dilettante fashion, as a tourist—nibbling at experience, titillating the emotions yet emotionally starved, stimulating oneself with ambition yet forever tortured by frustration. Circumstances and temperament, however, may conspire together so that, with the freedom of a nomad, one can escape the straightjacket of everyday boredom, hurdle fences of space and time, and consume life at its sources. Properly directed, such an earthly life may give wing to one's imagination, clarity to one's thinking, strength to one's convictions, and even bring one nearer to the simple, eternal truths of God and spirit.

This book, I feel, belongs in the second category—the category of the primitive.

I left my country quite as uninformed, I am afraid, as are most Americans with respect to other peoples and other shores. But everywhere I went I sought to touch reality—always honestly, and always at first hand. Everywhere I clung close to the smells, the flora and fauna of native existence. In that spirit I have written of the Arabs among whom I lived. I found much good and much evil—evil acquired through a feudal order that, in my opinion, remains the Arab's greatest enemy and his greatest barrier to emergence from the dark ages. I am grateful for Arab hospitality and the kindness I was shown, but a reporter, like a physician, must not remain blind to the ills plaguing his subject.

With no desire to attribute to myself or my writings any

exaggerated importance, it is my fervent hope that the many Armenians living in the Arab Middle East will not suffer at the hands of fanatics because an American of Armenian descent happened to write this book. To them I can only say that I have told the story honestly, as I saw it. And to my Arab friends who asked only that I "tell the truth," I can say in all conscience that I have told the truth. Let me assure them that I speak in this book as an American, and purely in an individual capacity, with no ties to or membership in any Armenian-American body save the church into which I was born. Any retribution against the Armenians—a minority island in a Moslem sea—would be an unwarranted and senseless cruelty.

I have written this book with the hope that it will bring both Arabs and Jews into truer focus for the reader; that it will help reveal what they are and what they are not, what may be expected of them and what is impossible. I pray that these ancient Semitic peoples will reconcile their differences, that Palestine refugees who, in the main, left their homes because Arab leaders urged them to do so—expecting a short war and a quick victory—will be resettled. The only alternative to peace is disaster for Arab, Jew, and Christian, for none may hope to prosper alone. Together they may ultimately build a prosperous and democratic Middle East. To remain apart, at dagger's point, means only that Communism and anarchy can be the ultimate victors.

This book could not have been written without the faith and love of friends. It would never have seen the light of day without the help of those who stood by steadfastly through the four stormy years of its preparation and writing, 1947–51. To Harold Strauss, my editor, and Paul Reynolds, my literary agent, I am grateful for their continuous faith and patience since they took me on four years ago. To the Reverend L. M. Birkhead I am equally thankful for his continued understanding and kindness. To Gerold Frank, who helped enormously in the editing and in clearing up a vast amount of the underbrush of writing, I especially owe a lasting debt of gratitude.

After my book was completed, I asked a Syrian Christian (who must remain anonymous because of possible retaliation against his relatives abroad) and the Reverend and Mrs. Karl M. Baehr to read the manuscript critically. My thanks also go to these Christian and Arab friends for their suggestions. However, it must be pointed out that the responsibility for this book—text and illustrations—is entirely mine.

April 9, 1951

JOHN ROY CARLSON

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CAIRO TO DAMASCUS

(PROLOGUE)

THE TREE BEARS FRUIT



*Our roots, transplanted from Europe, bear fruit here.
On free American soil we have the opportunity to
achieve all the great dreams, all the great resolves,
all the promises of human dignity which are so of-
ten stifled and destroyed in the Old World.*

ONE night in the spring of the year, when seed in the earth breaks sharp through the crust, I left my bed quietly, locked the door, and walked into the night. The rain—a full-bodied, lusty rain, driven by a furious wind—beat hard against the pavement, formed into rivulets, and flowed down slopes into the gutter. It slashed at the tops of trees and beat down the saplings and young shoots till they seemed to become one with the earth.

It was past midnight as I walked, drenched, in old clothes and old shoes. Sleep? I was beyond sleep. For days now something had been boiling and churning within me, seeking to come through. Solitude wouldn't bring it out, nor long walks in the country. Meditation in the back pew of a church didn't help. It was in the nature of things that the inner storm would subside only in the atmosphere of a storm outside. There was no other way of quieting me down.

I had no idea where I was going. I remember only that my head was bent to break the fury of the rain against my face. I kept staring at my feet, watching first one then the other shoe splash into a puddle and pull out, dripping, and ever be-

fore me the dark pavement, sleek and glistening with the spring rain. It was a warm rain, a lush, fertile rain, holding within it the magic to germinate whatever wanted to sprout.

Taxis passed, splashing New York's mud and water on me. I walked for a long, long time. Eventually my feet led me to the dock area of New York's West Side.

I stopped under a trestle and leaned against one of the supports. Then I shook my head and body like a poodle in from the rain. Up the road was an all-night diner. I dug my hands back into my pockets, bent my head, and began to cross to the other side. A car skidded to a stop in front of me. There was no splash, no sounding of the horn, no swearing from an irate driver. I halted when someone flashed on a light.

"Police," I thought to myself, and stood there, the glare full on my face. I was blinded, and I knew I must have looked silly, with water running down me on all sides, down my neck, under my shirt, into my socks. It's the most carefree feeling in the world if the rain is warm.

The man behind the wheel rolled down the car window to see me better. I stared into the flashlight and I think I smiled a bit. "Take a good look," I thought. "I haven't done anything—yet!" After a moment the flash went out, the window was rolled up, and the car vanished. I crossed to the diner, shook myself at the door, entered, and sat on a stool.

"Coffee!" I said.

"Nice night for ducks," the man behind the counter said. He was tall and gaunt, in his early forties: his long-jawed face was broken into a thousand premature wrinkles. They were especially thick around his deep-set eyes.

"Coffee!" I repeated.

I caught my hair in a scalp-lock and squeezed it like a mop to keep the rainwater from dripping into my coffee. Then I squeezed my collar and cuffs because rivulets of water were flooding the counter. The counterman looked on. The coffee felt good to my throat, like a hot egg-nog spiked with old rum. But it was making me too drowsy, so I put down a coin.

"Thanks," the man said.

I felt the pelting of the rain grow stronger as I approached the docks and came nearer the waters of the Hudson. The Jersey shore was invisible. I could see scarcely fifty feet ahead of me. There was no sound except the fury of the rain beating down on the ships and tugboats tied to the piers, striking their metal sides in a soft, purring staccato.

The rain seemed to bring out the myriad odors of the waterfront, stirring up what had been pulverized under the wheels of trucks and stevedores' boots. As I walked, there was the fetid smell first of oil, then of tar, and then the pungent odor of camphor. I moved along the dark, silent, wharves—resting now against a hawser post, now against the walls of a battered building, or leaning against the soft yet unyielding piles of merchandise covered with grease-soaked tarpaulins. I stared fixedly at the deep, dark waters, at what lay beyond them. As I walked, hunched over, I strained my eyes to look into the impenetrable darkness, for no reason I could give. Indeed, I had no reason for coming to this lonely spot, save that my feet had led me here.

A ferry whistle came deep from the depths of the mist, as if from a ghost ship: a long, haunting, lonesome wail that was like the bleating of a lamb lost deep in a forest. It made the night lonelier. I stood by, listening and watching for the ferry. Finally it emerged, looming out of the dark, its lights like misty globules, growing larger and more massive as it eased into its berth. There was a grind of rising gates, and then half a dozen figures emerged, shapeless as in a dream, and after them, truck after truck rumbled into the night.

BIRTH

THE mental numbness left me gradually, and my mind went back through the years—to a night in April 1921—when the

ship that brought my parents, my two brothers and me to the New World had docked not so far from this very pier. What had happened since then was nothing short of a miracle, but because it happened in a land of everyday miracles, few took notice.

I was then a gawky boy of twelve, with six English words in my vocabulary: "Yes," "no," "hot dog," "ice cream"—the last four picked up from the son of a returning missionary aboard the *Meghali Hellas*, which had left the Hellespont a month before it anchored here. I was born of Armenian parents in Alexandropolis, Greece, in 1909. My first twelve years were spent in a world wracked by war and violence. There was the first Balkan War, and the second Balkan War, then World War I, which really began as a Balkan clash and spread far beyond the boundaries of the Balkans.

The cruelest war was that waged by the Turk against the defenseless Christians of the Near East. The Armenians, the most defenseless because they had no government to raise its voice in protest, suffered most. One million were martyred. The number of maimed and orphaned no one knew. Their bleached bones stretched from Turkey to what are now the Syrian and Iraqi deserts. The River Euphrates ran red with their blood. No one knows the number in our family and among our friends who were massacred or driven by the Turk to suicide. Turkish officials wallowed in stolen wealth—wealth that later helped Kemal Ataturk finance his army and dictatorship. Providentially, the American Near East Relief and Red Cross came to the rescue of those who survived this Turkish genocide. Every Armenian today feels eternally grateful to them, and to all of America.

That painful Old World chapter closed when I began a new life in a New World. All that we had dreamed of before coming here now came true. On our arrival in 1921, father bought a home in Mineola, Long Island. In its cramped backyard we had a garden, raised chickens, and kept innumerable pets, which multiplied with such fecundity that father would ex-

claim: "What a rich country this is. Even the animals are in mass production here!"

Twenty miles removed from the "nationality islands" of New York, I grew up much as any American boy. I joined the Boy Scouts and the Order of DeMolay. I attended church, I fought with school bullies, I earned spending money by selling subscriptions to the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Ladies' Home Journal*. The first week after our arrival, I was enrolled in the third grade of the Mineola grammar school, and never failed a course until I reached algebra. I made the track, football, baseball, and debating teams, and spoke enthusiastically on brotherhood and Americanism.

In this wholesome, small-town atmosphere (Mineola's population was then 5,600) I lived at peace with Protestant, Catholic, and Jew; Democrat and Republican; Anglo-Saxon, old-line American, and European. Our family was accepted into this all-American community. Native-born Americans were my playmates and my teachers from the outset.

These were the main influences upon me in my youth, and this the environment in which I was molded as an American. My idealism—my conception of freedom, democracy, tolerance, the "American Way"—was shaped in this atmosphere for eleven idyllic years, till the end of my college days. The Communists would disdainfully call this bourgeois. But such is my background in the land of my adoption. By November 1926 my parents had become American citizens. We celebrated with a feast the eating of which lasted four hours.

Today, Father is eight years past the three score and ten mark, and still carries on a small import-export business. Patriarch of the household, he has become an excellent cook, especially of difficult-to-make, easy-to-eat Armenian pastries. Mother, while she'll never admit it, is approaching the same milestone, and still does her own housework. But despite that honorable mark, she's still fond of hats made from the multi-colored plumage shed by the family parrot. She has been collecting and distributing Polly's feathers for twenty-five years.

My parents have aged gracefully, and the faces of both are lined with life's labor. They are in good health, and ruggedly Republican. They consider Herbert Hoover the greatest living American, and will defend him with their last breath. This loyalty may be due to the fact that Father bears a startling resemblance to the Republican statesman. Actually, the reason is more pragmatic than ideological, at least in my father's case. While Father never speculated in stocks, and lost nothing during the disastrous Hoover regime, he suffered when Roosevelt devaluated the dollar to fifty-nine cents, comparably reducing its purchasing power abroad. Being an importer of food delicacies, Father lost forty-one cents out of every dollar. He never recovered from the blow, financially or psychologically.

Mother, out of loyalty, joined Father on the Republican bandwagon. As soon as they were entitled to vote, in 1926, they began to vote Republican, and have clung to the GOP like a Bulgarian peasant to his ploughing-bull. They are charter diehards, the equal of any old-line Anglo-Saxon Republicans—and proud of it. These are my parents. You must know them in order to know me, for as it is said in the Old World, the first-born son mirrors his parents.

My brothers, John and Steven, three and nine years my junior, have grown into comfortable, fairly prosperous middle-class conservatives. John is an accountant with a public-utility firm. Steven is a successful attorney, and has been elected to public office. Both served in the armed forces. They live and work in or near Mineola. Both are loved and respected.

GROWTH

I AM the rebel of the household.

I might have followed the same unruffled path except for an incident in 1933 which was so violent, and so unprecedented

in American history, that it determined for me the course of my life. This was the murder of my archbishop, Leon Tourian, at the foot of the altar of the Armenian Holy Cross Church in New York on Christmas Sunday, 1933.¹ He was killed by assassins who slashed with a butcher knife at the groin of the Archbishop as he led the Christmas processional. The murderers—caught and convicted—proved to be members of an Armenian political terrorist group called Dashnag, which carried its Old World feuds to our shores.

My hatred for organized evil began with the murder of this innocent servant of God who had been my priest and a beloved family friend. It was my personal awakening. The murder, too, was the first sign of how potently Old World hatreds had infiltrated into an America that I had considered impervious to them.

There was another factor determining my future. This was the depression of the early 1930's, which I witnessed at first hand while hitch-hiking across the country. It catapulted me into a world of stark realities. At one stroke, my thinking was revolutionized. I was ripped away from the idyllic isolationism of Mineola, the world of see-no-evil, hear-no-evil, speak-no-evil in which I had been reared. I began to question that world. I began to probe into its broken promises.

I tramped with the bonus marchers, ate slops with them, and slept in their miserable shacks on the Potomac. In my indignation I wrote a long article in the *Mineola Sun*. What else could I do? Hitch-hiking across the country, I saw two young men in St. Louis attack each other with knives over a loaf of bread. I saw others cross the continent in boxcars, looking for work. On lower Cherry Street in Kansas City, Missouri, I saw women forced to scrape a living by offering themselves for twenty-five cents a visit. On another street the price was fifteen cents.

I saw breadlines. The last breadline I had seen was as a child of nine in Sofia, Bulgaria, in the winter of 1918. The memory

¹ The incident is described in detail in *Under Cover*, pp. 15-16, 20.

of it! The queue was opposite our home, in front of a bakery. Old men and women—the young men were either at the front, in hospitals, or dead—waited for hours under a driving snow for a tin of hot stew and a stale crust of bread. Fifteen years later I saw the same sight in the United States. What was happening to America? I asked—in this proverbial land of plenty. I gathered extensive notes and photographs to write a book, but never did so. Instead—fresh out of college—I tramped the streets, and visited and revisited the employment agencies, as did twelve million others, looking for a job.

I returned briefly to Mineola, but I knew I had outgrown it. I went to New York City, where I worked and lived, for a time supporting myself on five dollars a week as a newspaper reporter, sleeping in a cold-water skylighted room and eating fifteen-cent meals at Bernarr Macfadden's Pennyteria. What I had seen and felt made me what some might call a radical. An American radical, yes, and somewhat of a reformer; but a revolutionist, a Communist, or a fanatic agitator against the American way of life, never. I am happy now that my faith in democracy was so deeply rooted that I took no stock of any promises other than those of my adopted country. Later, it pained me to read of those native-born Americans who, having devoted themselves passionately to Communist pursuits, recanted publicly—amid loud, commercialized fanfare.

New York helped complete my education in the world of realities. Here were the headquarters of the German-American Bund and the equally notorious Christian Front. New York was a symbol of an America that was being corrupted daily by the same cancers that had made a living graveyard of most of Europe. It was in New York that I saw murder, flop-houses, Fascism, Communism. In New York I undertook my undercover investigations for *Fortune* magazine—investigations that led ultimately to the writing of my first book. New York proved a grim tutor.

And I saw that those evils of Europe which my parents came here to avoid were now following us to our new home,

like rodents trailing in the shadows. To a sensitive, idealistic, religious, immigrant-born youth, the realization was shocking and disillusioning beyond words. *Under Cover* was the result of my labors to expose those who were betraying our democracy.

RESOLVE

THESE were the thoughts that came to me as I faced the water, oblivious to the rain, and the conflict of the Old and the New Worlds raged inside me. I saw myself as an individual product of that conflict and America as the mass product. I saw my adopted country as a treasure house of the good that is latent in all men. I saw America, too, as a sanctuary for those of us who are its immigrants. Our roots, transplanted from Europe, bear fruit here. On free American soil we have the opportunity to achieve all the great dreams, all the great resolves, all the promises of human dignity which are so often stifled and destroyed in the Old World. Here the immigrant becomes an American.

The compulsion to stare into the depths of the blackness offshore held me. Yet the more I gazed, unseeing, the more swiftly the panorama of my life unfolded, the more calm I was growing. My restlessness was slowly being replaced by a curious sense of quietude, the turbulence of the inner storm by the peace of mind that comes from self-understanding. Out of the rain-swept mists, stretching, it seemed to me, to the very shores of Europe, came the persuasion, the conviction—whatever one may call it—that I must leave my adopted country and return to the regions of my childhood; that I must seek the ancient earth upon which I had been born.

As this decision crystalized, a strange thing happened. I experienced a great serenity, a great inner peace, a clarity of vision unclouded by doubt and uncertainty. This sense of well-

being grew until I felt enveloped by a warm, comforting glow. I was suffused by a surge of strength and what seemed to be inspired decision.

A moment ago the past had unfolded: now the adventurous future beckoned. I resolved to go on an extended odyssey to my birthplace, to the distant places of the Middle East, to those strange and secret corners of the Old World which are outside the paths of the casual visitor.

I would attempt to interpret the Old World to the New. By adopting the techniques I had used in *Under Cover* I would study the forces and intrigues at work against us. As a product of the Old World, I felt I could gain the confidence of those with whom I would talk and live. I would then return to tell what I had seen and learned. Whatever lesson was to be gained from my experiences and from the comparison between the two worlds would be my own way, in these turbulent and perilous postwar years, of expressing my gratitude to America. This I had sought to do during the war years by exposing the enemies of my country.

And standing there in the rain, it came to me that almost everything that had happened in my life until this day—the curious, sometimes fantastic experiences I had had—might all have been designed to prepare me for this mission, this investigation of the forces of hatred festering below the surface from London to Cairo to Damascus.

Now the reaction set in. I felt cold. My watersoaked clothes were suddenly unbearable. I had to go home, to rest, to sleep. I turned up my coat collar and began to walk away from the river, my head buried in my topcoat. An automobile sounded noisily behind me.

“Hey, you!”

It was a police patrol car. Once again a flashlight played over me, head to foot.

“What are you doing at the docks at this hour?” the man at the wheel asked.

“Thinking. I think better when it’s raining.”

Silence. Then a voice from his companion. “The guy must be batty.”

“What are you thinking about?” the driver asked.

“About going abroad. I’m going there.”

“Don’t try to swim it,” his companion said.

“You work at anything?” the driver asked.

“I’m a writer.”

“A reporter? What paper?” asked the second man challengingly.

“An author,” I said.

“Got anything to identify you?” the driver asked.

I handed him my wallet. “You’ll find all my papers there,” I said. “Driver’s license, draft card, all you need.”

The two put their heads together, passed my papers between them, and the driver handed them back neatly.

“OK, bud,” he said, passing judgment noncommittally in the inimitable fashion of police officers. “Better get into some dry clothes.”

In the subway train I attempted to sit down but chills ran up and down my spine. I stood up all the way to my station. When I finally reached home I pulled off my waterlogged shoes and left them at the door. I took off my socks and held them by their tops between the fingers of my left hand. With my right, I opened the door. My wet feet marked the rug as I tiptoed toward the bathroom. There I threw all my clothes in a heap in one end of the tub and stood under a scalding shower. As the first rays of the sun slipped into the bedroom I pulled the covers over me and fell into a dreamless sleep. When I awoke, it was midnight. I rolled over, and slept peacefully until the dawn of the next day.



BOOK ONE



LONDON: THE ODYSSEY BEGINS



Inherent in the doctrine of National-Socialism [is] the spirit of humanity. . . . Fascism has the capacity to love. . . . Tolerance [is the] soapy water of humanity.

Captain Robert Gordon-Canning

"We are here this afternoon to greet Captain Canning heartily. He is our distinguished guest, and a sincere friend to our people. We immensely thank him for his efforts. . . ."

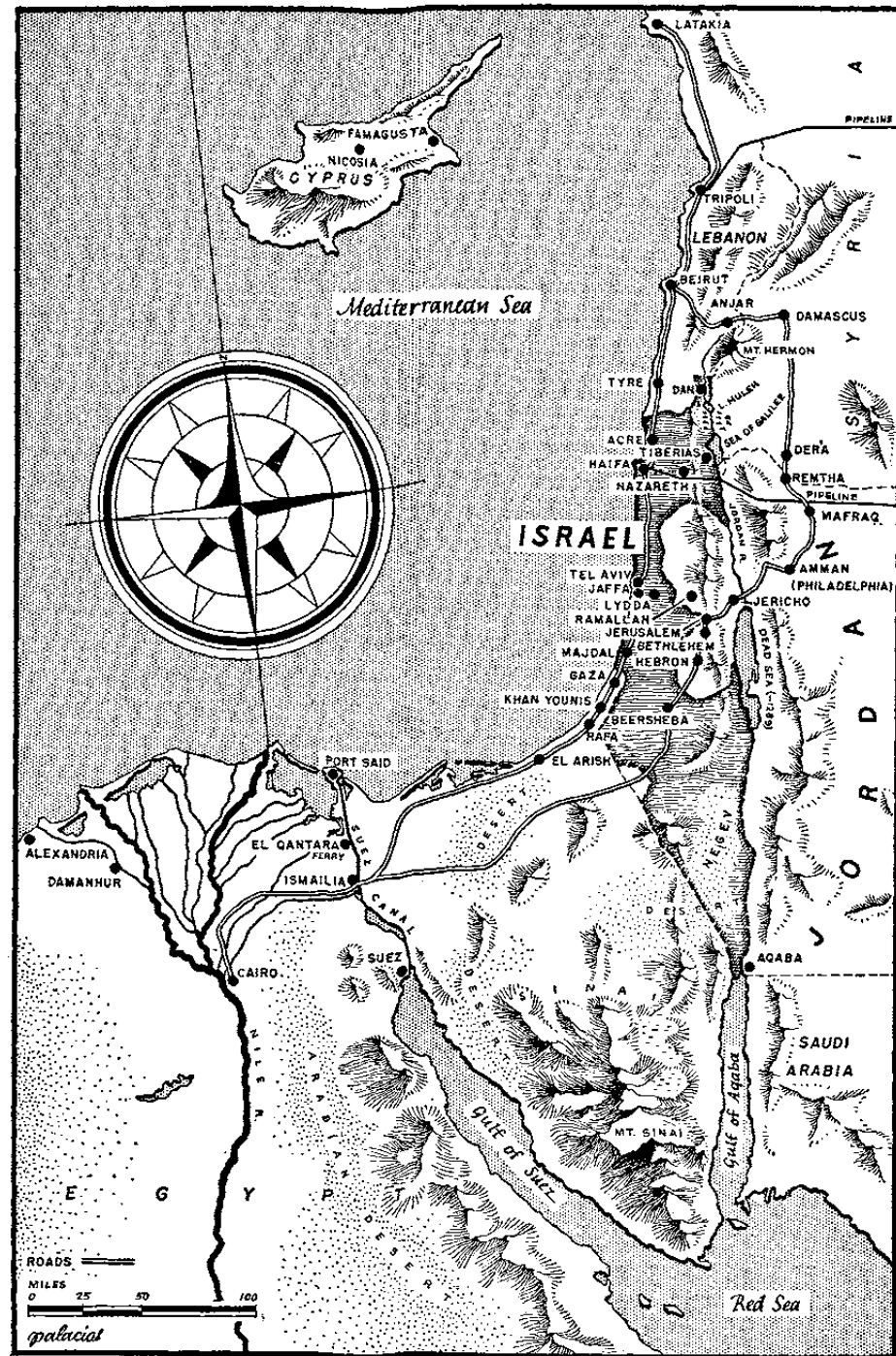
Grand Mufti of Jerusalem

MY BUS rumbled past closely built old homes and bombed-out buildings. Between them were empty lots, entirely gutted. The aftermath of war lay upon London, this January day in 1948, like a tattered blanket. Buildings were unpainted, the plumbing gone, the furniture creaky. To an American accustomed to lush advertising, the billboards, too, appeared strange. They mirrored the plight of London three full years after the end of the war.

GARMENTS MADE LARGE OR SMALLER. SUITS, OVERCOATS,
COSTUMES TURNED.

WASTE PAPER IS STILL VITAL. ARE YOU SAVING YOURS?

And then one poster that interested me particularly read:



If You Are between 18 and 28!

If You Want a Man's Job

If You Want to Earn £20 a Month and All Found

Get into a Crack Force—The PALESTINE POLICE FORCE!

This was only four months before the British mandate over Palestine was to end and Palestine was to be partitioned between Arab and Jew according to the United Nations decision. Why, then, were the British continuing to recruit Palestinian police?

"You will see those all over London," someone behind me said.

I recognized an English couple who had been fellow passengers on the plane that brought me from New York to London.

"Well," I said, greeting them, "I never expected to find London as run-down as this."

"Oh, everything's been leveled off—buildings as well as society," the man said. "The war and what's happened since have driven us to accept the equalities of Socialism. Some like it, others will never be reconciled to it."

"Do you think Communism or Fascism will follow Socialism?" I asked.

He laughed. "No, most of us aren't so worried about 'isms' as you are in the States. Perhaps it's because we have so little to lose materially. You Yankees are afraid because you have so much of everything. You're like the man with a full granary—who is afraid of thieves and hires bodyguards. We have no such fears."

UNDER COVER IN LONDON

His last words remained with me as I returned to my hotel, the Cumberland, where I had a room overlooking Hyde Park, Britain's historic forum for free speech. Would he be so casual

about "isms," I wondered, if he knew to what extent democracy's enemies were still active? I spent my first night reviewing my plans and taking inventory of what I had brought with me. There were four cameras (two were later stolen); dozens of packs of film, scores of names and addresses; and quantities of such delectable items (which were luxuries then) as rice, tongue, butter, and bacon, destined as my personal gifts to some of London's top political racketeers and hate specialists. I knew they would welcome me—not as John Roy Carlson, but in the guise I had chosen for myself.

I had not embarked on my overseas adventure without full preparation. My experiences in *Under Cover* and *The Plotters* had taught me that without careful planning my investigations would not only end in disaster but might lead to a cracked skull and worse.

In *Under Cover* I posed as George Pagnanelli, an American of Italian descent, no better than the hoodlums he traveled with, in order to infiltrate into the American Nazi bund and be accepted as a trusted worker among our native merchants of hate. In *The Plotters* I was Robert Thompson, Jr., a disillusioned World War II veteran who was eager to join with those Communists, preachers of bigotry, and political thugs who preyed on veterans. When the first copy of *Under Cover* appeared in 1943, George Pagnanelli vanished. When I turned in the finished manuscript of *The Plotters* in 1946, Robert Thompson, Jr., followed him.

But Fascism and Communism in America were only part of the over-all world picture. The exposure of the enemies within our gates could only be the beginning of my work. I also wanted to keep in touch with hate movements abroad, and so I invented still another character and established him in this field. I created "Charles L. Morey"—and it was as Charles Morey that I now began my undercover work in London. (Later, when I would reach the Middle East, I knew I would have to kill off Morey as I had Pagnanelli and Thompson. No native-born white American Protestant—which was what

Morey was supposed to be—would be accepted as a confidant by the Moslem world.)

I gave considerable thought to the character and profession I'd assume as Morey. I had grown older since my early experiences in undercover work, and had put on weight. A stranger could easily take me for a typical well-fed American businessman. That is exactly the character I assumed.

I invented a business for myself—sales manager of the Homestead Farm Appliance Corporation, with offices and plant in St. John, Indiana. As Charles Morey I began as early as 1945 a wide correspondence with every British hate-monger and anti-democrat I read or heard about. There is of course no Homestead Farm Appliance Corporation. I had never been to St. John, but a trusted friend lived there and he forwarded all letters addressed to me.

To give myself prestige, I issued a series of mimeographed leaflets—a technique I'd successfully followed in *Under Cover*—with such intriguing titles as “The American Nationalist Decade.” I praised Spain as the “European bulwark against Communism.” My headlines screamed: “The Nationalist Flame Is Burning at Home and Abroad,” thus rallying to my banner the super-patriots abroad. I chastised “Fair Deal Harry” and ranted against the “shackles of Communist Washington.” I also founded the “Federation Against Communism—American Section,” a simon-pure letterhead organization with invented names as officers. I wrote impressively of subsidizing nationalist organizations throughout the world from the limitless funds I either possessed or was capable of raising. (As Morey, in short, I represented myself as a one-man Marshall Plan, dedicated to financing the resurgence of hate movements and the growth of authoritarian ideology). The combination of letterhead, important-sounding leaflets, and dollar appeal gained the confidence of every international bigot to whom I wrote.

Now, in my hotel room, I looked over the names and addresses of those with whom I'd developed paper friendships.

They were the men and women I wanted to meet face to face before going on to the Middle East. I wanted to learn their methods; discover their associations with those in our lunatic fringe at home and with those promoting evil in the corner of the world to which I was going; and above all, to learn how both were plotting together to revive the flames they hoped would consume democracy.

Before me was a letter I had received from Victor C. Burgess, a long-time member of the BUF—British Union of Fascists. As Charles L. Morey, I had written Burgess following the tip of an American soldier who had seen him selling the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and similar literature on London's streets. Burgess's letter read:

. . . I am rather hoping that I can find a number of National Socialist friends in various countries, who will give me an opportunity of ousting the Jews from some of the Export trade. . . . Think it over, and let me know. In the meantime write again soon, and tell me the latest news of the American National Front. I hope that you are slaughtering as many Jews as we seem to be doing in Palestine. All the best,

Yours in Service,
V. C. Burgess

I made my first visit in London to him, unannounced, bearing my gifts of food and cigarettes. I found a man of twenty-eight, with watery blue eyes and long brown hair slicked back. His face was long and coarse; he was dressed in gray trousers, gray shirt, and a khaki jacket. His “export” office proved to be a ramshackle hallway room, with a battered desk and a wooden box for a chair. Next door was a room for his wife and two children. As one of the children began to cry, Burgess shouted from the box on which he was sitting:

“Shut up, Ralph. Damn that boy. Keep him quiet, Olive. Close the door, Olive. Damn it, CLOSE THAT DOOR!”

Before the door slammed I glanced inside. The room was

tiny, semidark, in undescrivable disorder. One child, nude except for a shirt, was crawling on the floor. The other was in a crib composed of boards against the wall, with more boards above the first, giving the appearance of twin coffins. Both children now broke into a howl, disturbing the fuhrer who was entertaining a guest from the USA.

"Olive!" Burgess shouted again. "Will you get them something to eat!"

After this he turned to me. He was very busy now, he said, co-ordinating the resurgent activity of members of former BUF units who had joined organizations such as the Sons of St. George in Manchester, British Workers' Party for National Unity in Bristol, and Imperial Defence League in Derby.

"My own outfit is the Union of British Freedom," he said. "I kept the initials of the old BUF." He published a hate sheet, *Unity*, for "Britain, King and People." It was a counterpart of Gerald L. K. Smith's publication, *The Cross and the Flag*, in the States.

"One of the boys has an outdoor meeting today. Want to come?"

"I'd be delighted," I said. "I'd like to see you fellows at work."

We walked to a side street near Victoria Park to hear one of London's leading rabble-rousers, Jeffrey Hamm. An ex-BUF member, now head of the British League of Ex-Service Men and Women, Hamm was haranguing a crowd of nearly a thousand persons. They were not a pretty sight. As Burgess stepped away for a moment to talk to a friend, I climbed on a doorstep and focused my camera to take an over-all picture of the crowd and the speaker. But a dozen or more listeners began to glare at me. I promptly closed my camera—began frantically applauding and cheering Hamm. It was too late.

In twos and threes men began to move toward me. Their plan, as I knew from experience, was undoubtedly to bottle me up in the doorway, then push me back into the hallway for a beating. I caught them off guard by walking directly through

their ranks and rejoining the crowd, hoping to lose myself in it. But I was being surrounded. In whatever direction I moved, a wall of three or four thugs immediately blocked my way. The circles grew smaller, the avenue of escape smaller.

Any display of panic would have proved my undoing. In front of me a powerfully built man who looked like a stevedore turned his head slightly and nodded, at the same time backing a step toward me. Behind me, I sensed two others move closer. The man in front suddenly wheeled his bulky body around and lurched against me, trying to jab his elbow into my stomach. An instinctive reaction would have been to step backward, but from the corner of my eye I had seen one of the men behind me doubled over. I would have fallen over him and, while on the ground, been kicked in the groin. It was an old Bundist trick. Chances of being heard above the roaring mob were practically nil. As I saw the elbow lunge viciously, I twisted my body at the waist and pivoted. The elbow missed. Frustrated, my assailant turned around.

"What you got there?" he growled, and grabbed my camera.

Someone behind seized my arm. I tried to pull away. Dimly I heard: "Throw him out! Give it to him! He's a Jew!" Cries rose all around me.

Then, somehow, in the swimming faces of the closing crowd, I saw Burgess.

"Burgess! Tell them I'm okay!" I yelled desperately.

I heard Burgess say: "I know him. Let 'im go."

The men fell back. The burly man returned my camera, then one by one they came up and apologized sheepishly.

"We were moving in on you," one said.

"We had you wrong, friend. We thought you were a bloody Jew."

"I can tell he was no Jew. He didn't make a run for it," someone else said.

Still breathing hard, but now surrounded by a loyal body-guard, I listened to Jeffrey Hamm. He was tall and stocky, with a square face and blond hair. A ferocious and devastating

speaker, Hamm was rated second only to Sir Oswald Mosley,¹ who was in retirement on his farm after being released from custody.

"Traitor Churchill, Traitor Attlee . . . England has been sold down the river to America by Traitor Baruch. . . . Britain First, England for the Englishmen . . . The dirty Jews, those miserable creatures crawling around London."

This sort of baiting delighted the crowd. They roared themselves hoarse. Somebody yelled: "It's time we wiped them out!"

"P J! P J!" some one in the crowd began to chant.

"What does P J stand for?" I asked Burgess.

"Perish Judah!" he said. "It's a good slogan."

"England is not without a leader," Hamm was bellowing. "It has a leader. A leader who was for Britain First, first, last, and always. Our leader is the greatest living Englishman—Sir Oswald Mosley!"

A deep roar went up from the crowd and echoed across Victoria Park.

"Mosley! Mosley! We want Mosley! We want Mosley! Heil, Mosley!" All around hands were outstretched in the Nazi salute. It was hard to believe that I was in London.

After the meeting I met Hamm, an educated, smooth-speaking man of thirty-one, who had once taught English in the Falkland Islands. We went to a pub together and drank warm ale. He told me he had been interned in South Africa during the war as dangerous to national security, and later been allowed to join the British army. Hamm was curious about "nationalism in America," how active our groups were, and what had happened to Father Coughlin.

¹The notorious Mosley, former Fuehrer of the British Union of Fascists, studied the teachings of Fascism in Italy. Home Secretary James Chuter Ede disclosed in the House of Commons that, according to the former Italian ambassador in London, Count Dino Grandi, Mussolini had been subsidizing the BUF at the rate of \$250,000 a year. Mosley visited Germany and conferred with Hitler. He is now active in the Union Movement, composed largely of former BUF members.

"We'll do all right here," he said. "It will take time, but we'll come back as strong as we were before."

MR. RAMSAY AND MR. RANKIN

HAMM, to be sure, was a rabble-rouser, no more. But among those whom I wanted to visit was an Englishman who worked on much higher levels. He was a Captain Robert Gordon-Canning, formerly of the Royal Hussars, who had been interned during the war for the same reason as Hamm. I had first seen his name in a *New York Times* dispatch from London reporting his purchase at auction of a huge granite bust of Adolf Hitler, part of the former property of the German Embassy, for £500. This was then equivalent to more than two thousand dollars.

I had immediately written to Canning expressing my gratitude for his "act of personal integrity" in saving the priceless bust from desecration. Presently I received a reply. After a few choice words against the Jews, Canning wrote: "I bought the bust of Adolf Hitler with a purpose! To challenge the Jews. To prevent purchase by them. To return [it] to Germany at a suitable time." Thus began a beautiful friendship, which bore fruit when Canning put me in touch with the only member of Parliament to be interned during the war for security reasons, Archibald Henry Maule Ramsay. In due time I heard from Ramsay, who prefaced his letter with the statement: "Communism is Jewish in origin, design and purpose." Charles L. Morey promptly replied in appropriate terms. In another letter Ramsay recommended the best addresses for patriotic literature. They were the fanatically anti-Catholic Alexander Ratcliffe, connected with the British Protestant League, and Arnold Leese, veteran Jew-baiter and publisher of *Jewish Ritual Murder*, which, like the *Protocols*, had served the Nazis as a prime propaganda weapon.

Ramsay was living in London, and I set out to see him before visiting Canning, who was at his farm some miles away. I found Ramsay in a small inconspicuous hotel. He was an unusually tall and gangling Scot, with a pronounced eagle nose. This once honored member of His Majesty's Parliament was now dressed in a frayed black suit and shoes that had seen better days. He had a close-cropped mustache and thinning hair. His deep-set brown eyes were settled in circles of wrinkles. He impressed me as austere and snobbish. His first question to me was: "Have you met Tyler Kent in the States?"

He was referring to the former decoding-clerk of our London Embassy, convicted of betraying the contents of cablegrams exchanged between Churchill and Roosevelt to one Anna Wolkoff (a pro-Nazi woman of White Russian origin living in London). Through her this vital information was to be transmitted to Germany through Italian agents in London.²

Ramsay was formerly one of the figures in the Nordic League, at which William Joyce (Lord Haw-Haw), later hanged as a traitor, had spoken. Ramsay warmed up as we talked and proposed an interesting mission for me. Could I possibly arrange with "a Representative like Mr. Rankin" to cable him (Ramsay), and query whether he did not believe World War II had been started by the Jews? This would give Ramsay the opening to reply with a blast against the Jews. Rankin would then insert the correspondence in the *Congressional Record*, after which American patriots would distribute the reprints by the thousands, free, under Rankin's Congressional stamp.

I agreed to see Rankin on my return home.

² Kent served five years of a seven-year sentence in English prisons. On his return to the United States in 1945, Kent's cause was championed by Merwin K. Hart of the National Economic Council; John O'Donnell, once columnist for the *Washington Times-Herald*; John Howland Snow, formerly an assistant in Lawrence Dennis's office (in 1943 Dennis was indicted, with 29 others, for subversive activities but after a mistrial the indictment was dismissed); Gerald L. K. Smith, and others. All of these persons published books or articles protesting Kent's innocence.

"Will you also take a message to Tyler and his mother?" Ramsay asked.

"Sure! Just write it down and I'll take it."

"I shouldn't put it in writing," Ramsay said. "I shall tell you later."

He went on to rant against the Jews. "We're completely under their domination here."

We walked out of his hotel together. With his black bowler and his umbrella Ramsay presented a dejected picture of austerity and loneliness. He was now a jobless, frustrated ex-MP living upon yesterday's ragged glory, such as it had been.

We parted, he to take a train at nearby Victoria Station, I looking forward to meeting his friend the next day.

THE MAN WHO BOUGHT HITLER'S BUST

MEETING with Captain Robert Gordon-Canning proved far more adventurous. As sales manager of the "Homestead Farm Appliance Corporation," I knew I could expect an English gentleman-farmer to ask me many questions. Next to machinery in general, I know least about farms, so it was with some hesitation that I went to visit him at his farm in Sandwich. I was warmly welcomed and served a brandy, after which we went out to inspect his land and stock. Canning had inherited considerable property and was obviously wealthy.

He began to ask about American farms, seed, markets, fertilizers, and sprayers. As we walked among his fine herds, he asked about our dairy industry. If my answers were fantastic, I'm sure Canning ascribed them to our American idiosyncrasies. It was a relief when the interrogation finally ceased and I turned to study my host. He was a towering, well-proportioned man, with a ruddy complexion. Much larger than normal, his face was set in a large head with a bald dome, and gave him a massive appearance. His eyes were blue, puffy, and encased in

deep wrinkles, but when he smiled they twinkled pleasantly. His very long upper lip, heavy drawling voice, and full but formless mouth gave the impression of a distant and self-contained man.

"At first I took you for a journalist," Canning said. "But you have a wide knowledge of farming and I see now that I was wrong."

Was he hiding his suspicions? I was not sure. But he talked freely, and that was what counted.

"You're an energetic fellow to find your way about so easily here. All you Americans are energetic. You're an odd people. You believe in humanitarianism abroad, but lynch your Negroes at home. The Jews, not your Negroes, are the ones to get after."

"You seem to know about us," I said.

"I once visited the States for Mosley," he confided, "to see if American industrialists would help us fight Bolshevism." He had seen James True and Robert Edward Edmondson, pioneer Hitler apologists once indicted for subversive activities. Canning's mission in the early thirties had been a failure. Father Coughlin would not see him, nor would Henry Ford. "I had breakfast with Lamnot du Pont.³ He wasn't sympathetic at all," Canning said. He then asked me what had happened to the America First Committee, to the Silver Shirts, and other organizations that had been active. I told him they had all been "persecuted by the Jews," and Canning said: "It was the same thing here."

We browsed around the fields and finally went into the charming living-room of his farmhouse for tea. Canning grew confidential. "I was at Mosley's wedding in Germany. Hitler was there as a witness at the ceremony, you know. I used to see Hitler in Munich and Berlin, and once had supper with Goebbels. Hitler was a fine man, a charming man. If three

³ Lamnot and Irénée du Pont both later were heavy contributors to the National Economic Council. Its president, Merwin K. Hart, has developed into a Jew-baiter and a chronic propagandist against democracy. See *Under Cover* and *The Plotters*.

Hitlers had been allowed to rule the world—in Germany, Italy, and England—we wouldn't be in the fix we are now, because each would have understood the viewpoint of the other. . . . Germany is bound to come back strong," Canning added.

He was an early member of the BUF, and in a booklet, "The Spirit of Fascism," he had written:

. . . The spirit of freedom runs right through the Fascist State, and affords to rich and poor a guaranteed liberty to proceed along the chosen road to life. . . . Inherent in the doctrine of National-Socialism [is] the spirit of humanity. . . . Only because of its immense humanity, only because of its mystical craving for "absolute union" of the nation, does Fascism proclaim its intolerance to those forces which prevent the attainment of this spiritual urge. Fascism has the capacity to love. . . . Tolerance [is the] soapy water of humanity.

This was the measure of the man who had bought Hitler's bust.

We got around to the Jews. "If I were in Palestine, I'd give my men twenty-four hours to do with the Jews as they wished. Silly humanitarianism," he said as an afterthought.

Canning said he knew Anna Wolkoff, friend of Tyler Kent. Canning also revealed that he was financing a book on Hitler's life. "Couriers" were bringing material direct from Munich and returning with instructions. As I was leaving, Canning said: "Will you mail these letters for me from London?"

"Of course."

We parted warm friends and agreed to meet again in his London apartment. On the train to London—without too many qualms of conscience—I opened a letter he had addressed to Professor S. I'. Darwin-Fox. Later, in the quiet of my hotel room, I photographed, sealed, then mailed the letter. Canning had written: "I am surprised that a thousand Jews have not been hanged in London during the last forty-eight

hours.⁴ There can be no doubt of us being a 'slave race' today."

I dined twice with Canning at his apartment in Cadogan Square, London. These were highly instructive meetings. For this man who bought Hitler's bust, and who—on the basis of his writings—might be dismissed as a crackpot, permitted his apartment to be used as a meeting-place by Arabs working in London. Canning told me he was a close friend of Abdul Rahman Azzam Pasha, the Jew-baiting secretary-general of the Arab League. He then showed me photographs taken with Abd el Krim, the Moroccan rebel leader ("back in the twenties I tried to make peace between the French and the Arabs"), and with other high Arab personalities. A prize in his collection was one taken with the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. Canning had written a pamphlet, "Arab or Jew," in which he reprinted the introduction the Mufti had given him at a dinner sponsored in Canning's honor by the Moslem Supreme Council in Jerusalem on November 5, 1929. This was the time of the bloody Palestine riots, when the Mufti gangs staged pogroms against Palestine's Jews. Said the Mufti then:

"We are here this afternoon to greet Captain Canning heartily. He is our distinguished guest, and a sincere friend to our people. We immensely thank him for his efforts he has been unceasingly exerting in support of our cause. . . . The Arabs in this country request all their British friends, and our distinguished guest, Captain Canning, is of the best of them, to be so good enough as to let the noble British people know the real facts in this country."

"I am one of the few Englishmen the Arabs trust completely," Canning said proudly, caressing the album containing the photograph of himself with the Mufti and others.

One night, when I knew Canning had invited a group of Arab leaders to his home, I dropped in casually at suppertime.

⁴ This was in reference to a series of anti-Semitic outbreaks in London, Liverpool, Manchester, and other cities, growing out of Jewish reprisals against the British in Palestine.

Canning greeted me at the door and took me into an ante-room. "I'd like to invite you to stay," he said, apologetically. "I know you're all right, but my guests are suspicious of all Americans."

A few days later he suggested:

"Why don't you see Izzed-een Shawa Bey? He's a man you ought to know. When you see him, give him my regards."

IZZED-EEN SHAWA BEY

I WAS delighted. I hurried to the address Canning gave me. It was a small, quiet apartment house of dark brownstone at 76 Eaton Square, in the exclusive West End section of London. I found myself in a dark, narrow hallway. I studied the names under the mailboxes: no Izzed-ccn Shawa Bey was listed. Acting on a hunch, I knocked on the last door in the hallway, which had no nameplate attached. After a long wait, I knocked again, vigorously, and then shook the handle noisily. The door was finally opened by a heavy-set young Arab who told me promptly that Shawa Bey was out.

"I can hear him talking inside," I said, bluffing. "I must see him at once."

The door was closed in my face and I heard a rapid-fire exchange in Arabic. Then it opened again and I was ushered into a semidarkened room. Swarthy young Arabs prowled about, escorting athletic young Englishmen into side rooms in an atmosphere of almost melodramatic conspiracy. Suddenly a door opened and an intense man in his thirties, with piercing black eyes and short black mustache, stepped out—instinctively I knew it must be Shawa Bey—accompanied by a tall, blond Englishman. The two shook hands briskly and the Englishman left. Shawa Bey turned to me.

"Come with me," he said curtly. I followed him into an office and he closed the door carefully after me.

Sitting across his desk, I was astonished to see that Shawa

Bey, save for his mustache, looked more like me than I did. Suddenly it flashed through my mind that if I were to raise a mustache and acquire a deep tan, I should have no difficulty passing for an Arab. I looked at Shawa Bey. How many British mercenaries was he hiring? And on what conditions? When were they to enter Palestine? By what route? It was too risky to ask.

"Cigarettes?" I offered him my pack of Luckies.

"I prefer mine to your American brands. I never change." His English was perfect. For a full minute Shawa Bey studied me without a word. "What's your nationality, your background?" he snapped.

"American, partly of French ancestry."

"What are you, a journalist?" He gave me a withering look.

I laid my calling-card on the desk. "I'm a salesman of farm machinery. I'm in England on business. Captain Gordon-Canning suggested I should drop in on you. He sends you his greetings."

"That is different," Shawa Bey said, unfreezing a little. "Canning is a very good friend. So you are from America!" he mused. "I've been to the States. You know Habib Katibah,⁵ of course." I nodded. "Very well," I said. Shawa Bey began to talk more freely. "The Jews think America is going to help them in Palestine but she won't because there's too much feeling against the Jews in the States. The Arabs are well armed and well equipped. Many have been infiltrating into Jewish territory. We are confident of winning."

"I plan to go to Palestine myself," I said. "I want to be there for the Arab victory."

"I wouldn't go now," Shawa Bey remarked. "I'd go a little later. Once the war starts, it won't take us long." We discussed some of the persons I'd met so far. "I've known Captain Canning for a long time," he said. "He has helped the Arab cause. Another good friend of the Arabs is Miss Frances Newton. She has been of great assistance."

⁵ Habib Ibrahim Katibah, whose activities are discussed in Chapter II.

I asked about the Mufti.

"He's in good health. He's in Cairo now. He goes back and forth between Cairo and Damascus. He has headquarters everywhere in the Middle East." Shawa Bey paused. "These next months are very important. The Jews will learn that quickly."

I rose to go. In the outer room, young British veterans of World War II in civilian dress were waiting to be interviewed. Within a few months I was to see them fighting and dying for the Arab cause under Arab names. I was to see them buried in unknown graves, in Moslem cemeteries, unhonored and unsung. I was to see them as prisoners of war in Israel. Izzed-een Shawa Bey rose to his feet.

"Good-bye," he said. "We might meet again in Egypt or Palestine."

If we did, I hoped he wouldn't recognize me!

Shawa Bey had mentioned the name of Miss Frances E. Newton. I looked her up and called upon her immediately. She lived near Canning.

"Who are you?" she asked. She wore a white patch over one eye.

"A friend of Gordon-Canning and of Izzed-een Shawa Bey."

"Any friend of theirs is a friend of mine," Miss Newton said.

She was a plump, elderly woman. She told me she had lived in Jerusalem, and was a Dame of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. She was also secretary of the Anglo-Arab Friendship Society. Its brochure, "The Truth about the Mufti," was a complete exoneration of the Mufti, and cited him for his "integrity and leadership," completely glossing over his role as the leading Arab Nazi.⁶ A signer of the brochure was "Y. Bandek, Arab Liaison." Later, Yusif Bandek became an active Arab propagandist in the United States, working closely with

⁶ The Mufti's role as a war criminal is discussed in Chapter XXII.

Merwin K. Hart and Hart's friend, Vice-Admiral C. S. Freeman.⁷

Miss Newton was collecting funds for a new group she had organized, British Aid for Distressed Palestine Arabs. Among the patrons was Azzam Pasha, the Arab League's mastermind. I had only had a glimpse of Miss Newton, but that served its purpose. It was only later, after I had been to the Middle East, that I began to understand the role played by these men and women.

ROAST DUCK AND ROASTED JEWS AT CANNING'S

ON THE eve of Lincoln's Birthday, Canning invited me to dinner to meet some of his friends. We had become very friendly, especially after I had sent the gourmet a pound of long-grain rice, then unobtainable in London. Other guests were Ramsay, Miss Newton, a friend of Anna Wolkoff named Enid Riddell, and Admiral Sir Barry Domville, who before his retirement had once been Heinrich Himmler's guest in Germany, and later was interned during the war.

The roast duck Canning served was delicious. His egg croquettes were marvelous. The fruit pudding with butter-rum sauce I've never had duplicated anywhere. We had wine, and splendid coffee, always rare in Britain. Canning was a generous host. I tried to be an appreciative guest. London was aflame over terroristic activities in Palestine and we were at no loss for conversation. Between mouthfuls, the Jew was our

⁷ See Appendix.

The facing page reproduces a postwar brochure issued after the Mufti's Nazi record was known. It "exonerates" the Mufti, claims his "integrity and leadership" were misunderstood, and "explains" his criminal record of collaboration. It is signed by Miss Frances Newton, friend of Jew-baiting Captain Gordon-Canning, and Yusif el Bandek, one of the chief Arab propagandists sent to this country.

(For Bandek's activities, and the story of his backers here, see the Appendix. The facts on the Mufti are related in Chapter XXII).

THE ANGLO-ARAB FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY THE TRUTH ABOUT THE MUFTI

The Mufti exonerated. ~~~~~ Hounded thus from one Islamic country to another, where could he be safe? Asia and Africa being closed, it was in Europe alone that no Zionist influence could secure his arrest. First in Italy and later in Germany, he remained, living in semi-house arrest under the close surveillance of the Gestapo, till, when the war ended, he moved into a villa near Paris. From France he again moved to Alexandria where he now remains in the custody of the Egyptian Government.

~~~~~ It is hoped that in the interest of continued good relations between the British and the Arabs, His Majesty's Government will re-consider their present attitude towards the one outstanding personality in whose integrity and leadership the Arabs, both Christians and Moslems, place their confidence.

**The Mufti holds the key.**

To think that the Arabs will accept any proposal for the solution of the deadlock in Palestine without the co-operation of the Mufti, would simply be a grave mistake.

*Worben*

Chairman.

*Frances E. Newton*

Secretary.

*Y. R. Bandek*

Arab Liaison.

MOUSTAPHA H. WAHBA.

diet. Between the appetizer and soup, we minced him. Between the soup and entree we had him roasted, or hanging from Palestinian lamp-posts. Thereafter the Jew—dead, quartered, massacred—was with us till we left.

“Palestine is the only country in the world where the Gentiles can get theirs in against the Jews,” Canning said. We all agreed that killing off six hundred thousand Jews would be as easy for the Arabs as shooting ducks.

Miss Newton said she had bought property in Palestine many years ago for £3,800 and had sold it to the Jews for £47,000. “I plan to have my property back after the Jews have been disposed of,” she added callously.

“I give the Jew two years after the Arabs win,” Canning observed. “The Arabs will do it gradually.”

They discussed Miss Newton’s plan to buy ambulances and medical supplies for the Arabs. Canning promised to hold receptions in his apartment to raise funds. “We’ll help behind the scenes,” he said. “It wouldn’t do for me to appear publicly on your committee. They’ll call you Fascist. The Admiral has also been smeared. We’ll all work from the sidelines.”

“All of us should help, whether with a rifle in our right hand, or with our left hand in our pocket,” Admiral Domville added brightly.

“Helping the Arab should come before our efforts at home,” said Miss Newton.

“If we break the back of the Jew in Palestine, we have broken it for a long time to come,” was Ramsay’s contribution to the conversation.

#### INTERNATIONAL HATE-MERCHANT

I RETURNED to my hotel to find a letter addressed to Charles L. Morey which had been forwarded to me from St. John, Indiana. It was from a notorious Swedish anti-Semite, Einar Aberg. In it he suggested that I ought to write one

George F. Green, in care of the Press Club, London. I was in London; and a man thus endorsed was worth investigating. I lost no time, telephoned him, and he agreed to see me.

Green headed the Independent Nationalists, and edited a British version of *The International Jew*. His contacts were worldwide. Gerald L. K. Smith quoted from his bulletins. We, the Mothers, Chicago’s leading female hate-contingent, not only quoted from them, but also sold *The International Jew*. In Canada Green’s correspondent was Adrian Arcand, once fuehrer of the Blue Shirts; in Rhodesia, Henry Beamish; he had similar correspondents in Argentina, South Africa, and Germany. There were many others, of course.

Green had no sooner greeted me at the Press Club than he expressed fears of “surveillance by MI-5” (British Army Intelligence). “Let’s not remain indoors,” he said. We walked to Victoria Embankment Park.

He was a short, pudgy, red-faced man, dressed in a worn and wrinkled dark suit, and he had about him the air of an energetic door-to-door salesman. He had earlier been in advertising and public-relations work. What teeth he possessed were irregular and brown-stained. A goodly number were missing, giving his mouth an empty look—but by no means interfering with his loquacity.

“I’ve been busy,” he said. “I had to provide bail for some of our members who were arrested and fined.” He was referring to the epidemic of brick-throwing against Jewish shops, the rioting and the beating of Jews in a dozen English cities and towns. “I don’t want to see one brick thrown,” Green muttered between his missing teeth. “I want to see a million. But I’m against too much violence at this time. Bad tactics. We’re not strong enough. Things will get better for us as England goes down. The Jews are bringing on the crisis. When it comes, we’ll be in.”

Green talked on. “It’s Zionist world-Jewry and their control of international finance which is a threat to world peace. I’m against giving foreigners citizenship. I’m against internation-

alism and Communism. The Independent Nationalists is a radical and revolutionary party. We're for a Briton's Britain." Green continued—now sounding like a Communist—suggesting once again the alliance possible with political extremists: "I'm against the exploitation of the people by the privileged and the powerful few. I'm against the party system. I'm against Monopoly Capitalism. There is no freedom under the venal monopoly press. There is no free trade under the international cartels. Britain shall not become a Yankee puppet state!"

He added, suddenly: "I wish I were in the States now. Back in 1926 I was offered thirty thousand dollars for a promotional job. I've looked back to that offer. I wish I had taken it."

Some time later Green sent a letter to me, part of which I reproduce for its brutal forthrightness:

"I have only one word—JEW. I am not prepared . . . to join in any activities which are not fully, openly and efficiently directed against *all* the activities of world-jewry. Racial, political, social, economic—in fact a spiritual and material war on jewry. Race is first, fundamental; next comes nationalism. . . .

Let us by all means unite and work together on the major problem, the cause of world-evils: jewry, jewishness, judaism. If you can inspire such a united effort of nationalists against jewry I am with you wholeheartedly. I am confident that my friends in Africa and Sweden are, too. . . . Thank you for your card but the reason why I don't go and enjoy the food and sunshine you mentioned is the fact that I am now tightly fixed in a jewish concentration camp called "England."

Green assured me that he was friendly with the editor of *World's Press News*, an important British weekly. I was skeptical of Green's claim until he arranged for the three of us to meet for lunch. When the editor failed to show up, I was not altogether surprised. The very next day, however, I received not only an apology but a proof that Green was at least acquainted with him:

I am sorry that I was unable to make the grade today and link up with Green to see you, but this is press day and I have been very rushed. I shall make a point, however, of contacting Green in the next day or two—I have a tentative mission on which to see him—and will hope to absorb from him something of what you have been able to tell him.

With regrets,

Yours sincerely,

(signed) Arthur J. Heighway

Managing Director and Editor

I called on Heighway immediately. By this time I had learned that he had written an editorial in the September 25, 1947, issue calling attention to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Although admitting that a Swiss court had declared the *Protocols* to be a forgery, Heighway commented: "That 'forger' seems to have been a prophet of no mean order." I wanted to know why he had written this, and whether Green had put him up to it.

My interview was short, for which I was glad. Heighway was youngish and prematurely gray. He impressed me as smug and self-satisfied. I came to the point and asked him about the *Protocols*.

"Green gave me a copy," Heighway said, "I don't know if they are truthful or not. That is not the issue. All I know is that they fit into present conditions. Maybe some parts are faked, but there is enough truth in them to make them worth while."

Heighway's attitude toward a document that had been the Nazis' favorite instrument betrayed an amazing lack of reportorial integrity in a man holding an influential position in British journalism. I was shocked.

"Are you in touch with the Arabs?" I asked.

"Why, yes. I met Shawa Bey recently at luncheon. Let's see . . ." Heighway raked through a sheaf of calling cards and found what he was looking for. "Here it is—Izzed-een Shawa Bey."

"I know," I said. "Mr. Green asked me to look him up, too."

"Very intelligent fellow," Heighway commented. "Knows what he is doing."

"What is he doing in London?" I asked.

"Organizing British ex-servicemen for the Palestine show. He's got five hundred of them, all trained men, and he's got officers to train them further."

"Do you intend to press the Arab viewpoint in *World's Press News*?"

"Well, we're supposed to be neutral," Heighway answered. "But if there's a newsbreak we'll see what we can do."

He laughed toothily, and I left him.

In my hotel room my last night in London, I packed for the next leg of my journey to Cairo. As Charles L. Morey I had met those I had wanted to meet and had been given an instructive introduction to what I might expect in the Middle East. I sent to New York large quantities of hate-literature for my files; and I had also sent a thick envelope of notes. All this I knew, however, did not reflect the real, the democratic England.

For as a people, I had found the average Britisher decent, law-abiding and even-tempered. I had begun to understand why the British always pull through; and I had begun to appreciate their moral strength, their emotional maturity which, it seemed to me, helped explain why they were able to gravitate into the orbit of Socialism without a violent revolution. The Burgesses, the Cannings, and the Greens were not typical of the British. Nothing, I felt, so truly typified the British spirit as did Hyde Park, the very Hyde Park I could look down upon from my room in the Cumberland.

One unforgettable Sunday night, as a cold drizzle fell, I had strolled by when a lean, hungry-looking man in cap and Bowery-like overcoat began to lead a group in old-fashioned hymns. There were many young people and a sprinkling of

soldiers in the crowd. Perhaps it was the faces of these young, earnest men and women, or perhaps it was the nostalgic memory of my choir-singing days as a boy in the Old World—but I was deeply stirred. I joined them, singing the hymns I had learned in Sunday school in Mineola. I felt, somehow, that I belonged with these, the underprivileged and unheralded.

Around me were men and women who for years had lived in the cavernous depths of subway tunnels, survived the diet of fish paste and horse meat, wore the same clothes months on end, and faced every conceivable hardship with fortitude. They could never be truly crushed or defeated. If such a people still kept faith in their nation and faith in their God, and prayed to Him with hymns under a drizzle that chilled me to the bone—then such a people, I felt, with God's help should and would live forever. For this was the home of freemen, of brave and devout men. The last vision I have of Hyde Park is that of the lean Englishman in the Bowery coat using a stubby pencil as baton, leading the group in *Abide With Me*.

I felt that was the real Englishman, the real England. Not the imperialistic England of ruthless colonial rule, not the England of the British lion, its tail twisted by Eire, Iran, and others yet to come, nor yet that of the English bulldog snarling at the dark peoples of the world, but an England of pious, humble, kindly men and women. As I saw it, there was much to be condemned in their tolerance of the immoral international standards set by their Foreign and Colonial offices, but I felt that whatever they, the people, undertook to do, they would do calmly, without hysteria. They had faith in their country, in their God, and in themselves.

Early the next morning I visited a physician and was inoculated against cholera. At noon I was aboard a plane flying east—eastward via Switzerland to Cairo, heart of the Moslem world, neighbor to the Holy Land now preparing for a life-and-death struggle on an ancient battlefield.

## CAIRO: THE KING'S JUNGLE



*"You will maybe like this!" The Arab demonstrated. What seemed to be an ordinary whip suddenly became a vicious, four-sided, ten-inch dagger tapering to a fine point. "This knife for Yahoo. But maybe you Amerikans like Yahoo, yes?"*

*I took no chances. "No, I hate Jews. Allah's curse on them."*

THE plane dipped sickeningly. I attempted to struggle upright in my seat but the safety belt held me like a straight-jacket. I groaned.

I was in a state of delirium from my cholera shot. There was no doubt that it had taken. A red welt the size of a mushroom was rising rapidly. A high fever ran through me. Twice I had stumbled while walking to the plane, for the fever burned at my temples like a scourge. Once in the plane I had fallen into my seat, and tried to doze off—awakening in fits and starts, each time with a sense of impending doom. Suddenly I let out a cry. Though I thought I had suppressed it, the hostess hurried to my side.

"Look! We're going to hit that mountain!"

"That's the Matterhorn," she said quietly. "We won't hit it."

The Matterhorn was a terrifying sight in the blue-white

light of early dawn. A giant sheath of awesome rock, it leaped up from the depths of the earth to the heavens, a flame of stone nearly three miles high. It seemed alive to my tortured eyes, like a Cyclops challenging our flight. It was the most sinister peak in the glowering, snow-capped mountains that reared their white crests on either side as we roared perilously between them at more than four miles a minute.

I had no recollection of the rest of the trip. I have no idea of the route. I took neither food nor drink. I suffered nightmares. I writhed and tossed and broke out in wave after wave of alternate hot fevers and cold sweats. . . . It was symbolic. I was leaving the West and plunging into the maelstrom of the Middle East—a transition from one world to another radically different. The Eastern world—the world of tomorrow's major revolution—was bathed in anarchy and in blood-letting, a mirror showing the face of man as no man would wish to see it. . . .

I awoke to hear the hostess announce: "We are landing in Cairo."

It was seven p.m., exactly on schedule. The day was March 2, 1948. "The month of March, the month of trouble," Mother used to say. By an odd coincidence it was on March 1, 1921, that we left the Old World to come to the New. Now, exactly twenty-seven years later, I was returning to the Middle East, that mysterious, often sinister part of the world about which we really know so little, and that little so glamorized and distorted by partisans as to resemble fiction more than truth.

## THE KING'S JUNGLE

I ALIGHTED from the plane into the jungle of Almaza Airport (where an advocate of "white supremacy" would certainly have had instant apoplexy). We were herded by a dozen dark-skinned officials and plainclothesmen wearing

fezzes—in Egypt called a tarboosh—into an enclosure. To call it barnlike is to dignify that square-shaped factorylike warehouse with its low ceiling, its sickly yellow lighting and its wild mélange of milling, sweating men. We were lined up against a counter under a huge photograph of King Farouk, while a slovenly official in blue serge and tarboosh took his place behind a rough wooden table and began to check our names twice against what was evidently a blacklist. Ahead of me in the line was a passenger whom I recognized by his name as Armenian. I struck up a conversation with him. He was a well-to-do merchant who had escaped from Rumania a step ahead of the satellite police. Eventually he hoped to reach Brazil.

“The Turks killed my father and brother and burned our home. The Nazis killed my other brother. Only my mother is alive in Rumania. She begged me to leave in hopes that I could keep alive the family name.”

The bureaucracy at Almaza Airport was appalling. Passports were tossed from hand to hand; baggage was examined and re-examined; orders were shouted and replies shouted back; every official managed to interfere with the work another had done or was trying to do—and all this amid an ear-splitting babble of screaming and hysterical, gesticulating argument. A horde of porters, idlers, and hotel agents streamed through an exit to my left. Every few minutes, when the clamor grew unbearable, an official would literally howl above the tumult. There would be a momentary silence and then the noise began again.

The porters were a far cry from what I had been accustomed to in the United States. They were dressed in catch-as-catch-can clothing—some in European dress or parts thereof; others in the traditional costume of the Egyptian *fellah*, or everyday laborer, consisting principally of a long-sleeved cotton nightshirt called a *gallabiya*, which came almost to the ankles. It was open at the neck and revealed either a vest or naked skin. The feet were bare, or sometimes encased in

sandals, the toes protruding. A few wore a sash around their waists. Some had brightly colored calico skullcaps. The cheeks of some of the darkest-skinned were scarred with deep vertical gashes—tribal decorations. These were Sudanese, natives of the great rich land to the south of Egypt.

In some concern I asked my Armenian friend: “Where are you going to sleep tonight?” I had made no plans for myself.

“I have reservations at the Continental Hotel,” he said.

“Suppose I go there with you,” I suggested. “If I don’t get a room, will you let me sleep on the floor?”

He smiled. “Oh, I don’t think it will be that bad,” he said. And then he spoke with Armenian hospitality: “But, please, you are welcome to use my bed. I can sleep on the floor—it will not be a new experience for me.”

More than two hours later, we were still trapped in red tape and inefficiency in the airport. When we were finally cleared by the customs it was ten p.m. We emerged through the doors with a sigh of relief, only to find ourselves plunged into a new bedlam as porters, idlers, hotel-hawkers all lunged at our luggage at the same time, pulling us in half a dozen different directions.

“Please, sair, my hotel is the best in Cairo, with hot water and clean beds. . . .”

“Please, sair, there is no better hotel in Egypt. This way, sair.”

We fought our way to a taxi, carefully supervised the loading of our bags, and hurled ourselves inside. We left behind us the jungle of Almaza Airport and two loudly protesting nightshirted porters who had received the equivalent of a dollar tip.

“Give them a pound,”<sup>1</sup> the driver muttered in heavily accented English, “and they will still curse you.”

Cairo, an hour or so before midnight, was wide awake. Many shops were open and the sidewalks were crowded.

<sup>1</sup>The Egyptian pound was then worth \$4.12.

Despite my fears, there were rooms available at the Continental, a long-ranging hotel with a terrace fronting on one of the city's main streets. We each drew a long, bare, high-ceilinged room, its furniture consisting of a bureau with fly-specked mirror, a mat, a washbasin, and a high, squeaky iron-poster bed. We ordered a midnight snack, served by a white-robed Sudanese waiter wearing a high red fez. As we ate, my Armenian friend spoke bitterly of his experiences. Had the police, he wondered, seized his mother, perhaps tortured her to learn his whereabouts? Was she even alive at this moment? He was eating the good, rich food of Cairo: had his mother even a hard crust of bread?

"*Asvadez medz eh*," I said to him in Armenian. "God is merciful."

Then we separated and went to our rooms.

Tired as I was, I lay for a long time, thinking, before sleep came. My plans, for the moment, were not too clear. One man I had to see: Ahmed Hussein, leader of the Green Shirts of Egypt, who I knew had been in the United States lecturing and organizing as an Arab agent. I counted on him to introduce me to the undercover world of Egypt. But I felt, intuitively, that I must not be overcager. First, I must get the feel of Cairo; learn something of the customs, habits, peculiarities, even smells, of Egypt and its people. So far as anyone was concerned, I was no longer Charles Morey. He now vanished and I became myself, using my real name—an American of Armenian descent, a Christian sympathizer with all things Egyptian and Arabic.

And on that thought, I fell asleep.

I was awakened, it seemed only a few hours later, by the braying of a donkey. I looked at my wrist watch. Six a.m.! At first I thought this a novel, even romantic way to be aroused, but that fiendish animal awoke me punctually at the same unearthly hour every morning of the twenty-nine days I stayed at the Continental. I devised wild schemes to silence it. I thought of threatening its master, of hurling a

well-aimed flowerpot, of poisoning it in some ingenious manner, but from my window I could not even see my enemy. Nor did I ever find him—the loudest-braying donkey in Cairo!

My initiation into the rough and tumble of Cairo street life began as soon as I came down the steps of the hotel terrace. At once I found myself the coveted prize of three night-shirted men fighting the privilege of accosting the newly arrived foreigner. The winner—the fiercest in manner, voice and face—won by jabbing the others with his elbow, accompanied by threatening gestures with an ugly black whip he obviously carried for that purpose. For a full block as I walked, ignoring him, the dragoman kept at my side, chattering excitedly in English, offering to show me the sights of Cairo, the Pyramids, the bazaars, the restaurants. I played mute lest he learn that I was an American, universally considered a millionaire, or at least a fool with money.

"Allah, Allah. Leave me alone!" I growled finally. "I don't want anything."

"Ahhhh, you are Amerikan!" He grinned at me like an old friend. "Welcome. Amerikans I love very much. I have many Amerikan friends. See, sair, I have letters from Amerikans. . . ." He began producing testimonials to his abilities as a guide. "Amerikan ladies say how wonderful my service. . . ." He stuck his card in my hand.

Every morning thereafter, like the braying donkey, for twenty-nine mornings Abdel Baki Abdel Kerim went through the same ritual. Nothing I could do made any impression upon him. The moment he accosted me, grinning his grin of love and affection, I would yell *no!* in a voice loud enough to shatter windows across the street. Abdel Baki Abdel Kerim was never discouraged; after trotting along with me for a block, he would stop, wave his hand in salute, and shout happily after me: "Tomorrow, sair, please, I see you again tomorrow."

Uncannily, he always saw me first. After a while I accepted my fate and took "Dragoman No. 12" for granted, and even



used him as a source of information. Many hustlers of his type earned a livelihood by any and every means: as guides to the city; as liaison to hasheesh dives; as commission merchants for perfumes, jewelry, handbags; as money-changers and black-market operators; as procurers of women and men as well. Homosexuality was a socially acceptable vice practised commonly in all Arab countries, as I was to learn. Dragomen were prepared—for money—to supply me with any commodity, human, animal, or vegetable, and to suspend all judgment on my morals.

Business was bad on all fronts, Abdel Baki complained. Tourists had been frightened by a recent cholera epidemic; there was a great deal of suspicion and hatred of foreigners, particularly among hot-headed students and “political” men who didn’t realize how fine and splendid American tourists were; and to add to all the trouble, tourists were frightened by the long-awaited Arab-Jewish war in neighboring Palestine.

“Ah, sair, the Jews . . .” he said.

### I MEET THE POLICE

HALF of my day in Cairo was spent keeping out of jail. I began the morning determined to photograph a near-by mosque, magnificent with its slender stately minaret silhouetted against a breathtakingly blue sky.

I focused my camera but hadn’t even pressed the shutter when I became aware that someone was watching me. A short distance away stood a policeman, dressed in a shapeless black wool uniform and the ever present red fez. I closed my camera and nonchalantly moved on. Glancing in a showcase, I saw him nearing me. A moment later a heavy hand plummeted down on my shoulder, and another grabbed my camera, nearly ripping the shoulder strap. He pulled me over to a traffic officer and the two jabbered excitedly. A surly crowd

gathered. It was decided that my fate should be sealed in the Karakol Abdin Kism—the Abdin District Police Station.

Flanked by the two policemen, and followed by a crowd yelling “Yahoodi”—Jew—we walked on. Once I turned around, and beating my breast like an outraged patriot, I shouted: “I am an American!”

“Then you are worse than a Jew!” someone yelled in perfect English.

Those in front rushed up, tried to jab me with their sticks, and threatened me with their whips. Most Egyptians apparently carried one or the other, handy for warding off flies, urchins, or would-be thugs. Had not the police flailed back savagely, I might easily have been mauled. A few months later an American, Stephen A. Haas of Philadelphia, sight-seeing with his wife and an Arab guide, was fatally beaten while police looked the other way.<sup>2</sup>

Once inside Abdin Station, an arsenal bristling with police, each of my two captors grabbed one of my arms and vigorously pushed me into a dark room. Dozens of rifles were leaning against its walls. On a shelf above were several dozen black shields—obviously used by the police when they charged rioting mobs. In one corner were piled handcuffs and loaded bamboo poles; in another, three-foot-long wooden clubs, apparently companion pieces to the shields. I was unceremoniously shoved before Sergeant Abdel Fattah of the Criminal Investigation Department.

“Your passport,” he said as soon as I entered.

<sup>2</sup> On July 17, 1948, Haas was attacked by a mob near the Citadel. Stabbed and left dying on the street, he was finally picked up and taken to a police station. There he died in the presence of his wife, who had to stand by helplessly as her husband bled on the floor where he had been flung by the police. Nor could she seek help from the United States consul or from doctors, according to newspaper reports.

Our chargé d’affaires vigorously protested against “the unwillingness of certain Egyptian police to intervene promptly and effectively, and of their totally unwarranted and inexplicable efforts to prevent Mrs. Haas from communicating immediately with the American Embassy.” Later three Egyptians were arrested. Eventually they were released and nothing further happened.

He stood up as I approached. The two police made their complaint. Sergeant Fattah stared at me for a moment impassively, and then sat down and began to write. He wrote for ten minutes in slow Arabic characters, proceeding from right to left, asking questions as he scribbled. The police nodded. I had said nothing up to this time, and finally ventured: "All I wanted was to take a picture of a beautiful mosque."

"In a few minutes we will finish," Sergeant Fattah said politely. He left for a moment and returned with three plain-clothesmen. They took positions on either side and behind me. Then they rearranged themselves, studying my face from every angle. I felt history was repeating itself. Back in the days with the Bund and the Christian Front, anti-Semitic thugs would similarly study me to determine if I were Jewish.

"I am a Christian American," I found myself saying.

"You may smoke if you wish," said Sergeant Fattah. "In a few minutes we will finish."

Another culprit was pushed in—a cross-eyed man, bare-footed, dressed in a filthy nightshirt. Still another was brought in—limping, with running eyes; he was shunted to one of the other desks. A third, dressed in a semi-military costume, was yanked in by his scruff, and stood cowering. At least, all three got action, for they were taken away at once.

"What are you going to do with me?" I finally asked Sergeant Fattah.

"In a few minutes we will finish." It was the third time he had said it.

"I would like to telephone our embassy," I said.

"Yes, you can telephone. I will take you to a telephone."

Led by the sergeant and followed by my two policemen, I crossed a room teeming with police and wretchedly dressed men and women under arrest. We finally arrived in a dungeon-like cubbyhole under a staircase. Painted black up to the height of my shoulders, it was a damp, filthy hold smelling of sweat, with no ventilation except a tiny barred window high

above us. Behind an ancient, battered switchboard sat Cairo's most excitable man: a gray-haired toothless police officer with a face like well worn brown leather and two earphones perched over his bald head. In front of him were two old-fashioned desk phones and a mouthpiece protruding from the switchboard, and into these he screamed alternately. Evidently there were no extension phones in the building, for he would scrawl a message, howl for a courier, and scream at him to hurry with it. I watched, fascinated by the sight of this toothless old man frantically and conscientiously trying at this antique board to handle all the incoming and outgoing messages of an extremely busy police station. Every few minutes he would rip out all of the plugs, slam down both phones, clamp his fist over the mouthpiece, pull off the earphones, and glare, like a madman in a fit of temporary sanity. I could not blame him. Any man could easily go out of his mind in that black dungeon.

I was in line to make my call when he suddenly stiffened. Apparently an urgent message was coming in. He gestured to us to be quiet, listened intently, then chattered excitedly. Sergeant Fattah said it was from the "European Division" and it concerned me. For the next few minutes my fate hung in the balance, as the operator wrote the message while the two phones jangled madly. Finally he gave the note to the sergeant, who read it silently, and then motioned me to follow him. We retraced our steps, the two police clinging behind me like bloodhounds.

When we arrived at his desk, Sergeant Fattah announced that he was compelled to keep my camera pending further investigation. Paper, cord, and sealing wax were brought. My camera was wrapped as carefully as any of Pharaoh's mummies, and tucked away in a desk drawer, with the promise that it would be returned to me. I was free.

Returning to my hotel room, I delegated my hat—a collapsible Stetson—to the bottom of my suitcase. It definitely

marked me as a European. I unpacked my second camera, a flat folding type,<sup>3</sup> put it inconspicuously in my coat pocket and sallied out again. At a near-by sidewalk café I took a seat and ordered a jet-black, sickly sweet demi-tasse.

Cairo's daily life swirled around me. Men in *gallabiya* went by with swishing skirts. Copper-skinned Bedouins walked past in native *burnous* (muslin cloak, swooping down to their feet) and *khaffiya* (a linen headdress, usually white, worn over the head, and falling over the neck.) Rare, white-skinned, unveiled Egyptian beauties mingled with parchment-faced orthodox Moslem women wearing their black *yashmak*, veil. Swarms of urchins who apparently hadn't bathed since birth ran about looking for opportunities to beg or pilfer. Hawkers peddled combs, wallets, contraceptives, and whips. One peddler who came to my table was particularly insistent, although I repeatedly waved him away. He was a keen-faced young man.

"You will maybe like this!" the Arab demonstrated. What seemed to be an ordinary whip suddenly became a vicious, four-sided, ten-inch dagger tapering to a fine point. "This knife for *Yahood*. But maybe you Amerikans like *Yahood*, yes?"

I took no chances. "No, I hate Jews. Allah's curse on them."

"Ah," he grinned triumphantly. "Then you buy knife to kill *Yahood*?"

"No. I have one bigger, a Turkish knife. I kill Armenians and Jews with it."

Sly money-changers sidled up to me. A beggar in tatters and the face of a mummy stretched out a palsied hand in the name of Allah. Cabmen drove with one hand on the wheel, the other on the horn, shouting at jaywalkers. Donkeys hee-hawed interminably from every quarter. Powdered horse-dung, finely ground under the wheels of carriages, was wafted by every passing breeze into my nostrils and into my cup of coffee. Swarms of green-black flies patronizingly came to my table

<sup>3</sup> Weltur, with Zeiss Tessar f/2.8 lens, taking 2¼ X 2¼ pictures. With it I took most of my subsequent photographs.

after feasting at fresh droppings everywhere. Two students now approached me, selling anti-Jewish stamps in support of a war fund. By this time I knew the answers.

"I love Cairo, queen of Arab cities. Give me two dollars' worth."

"Thank you, thank you, Amerikan. We wish you good fortune."

An hour later their good wishes came true, for the two dollars proved the wisest investment I made in Cairo.

After my coffee, I decided to stroll along a main street, pledging myself to keep out of trouble. But a camera in the pocket of a photographer burns like idle money in the hands of a gambler. I looked around carefully, up and down the block. I whipped out my camera and sighted the window of an attractive pastry shop. Surely there could be nothing subversive in photographing luscious, syrupy, mouth-drooling *baklawa* and *katayef*—pride and joy of Oriental pastry.

Without warning, someone from behind struck down my wrist, and clutched my sleeve. A short, stocky, wild-eyed Egyptian was chattering at me.

"OK, take it easy, take it easy," I said, pocketing my camera.

"Ahaaa! You Amerikan?" He became more excited. Gripping my sleeve in a clutch of steel, he shouted for help. A dozen passersby rushed over, surrounding me. Off we went again double time, to the *karakol*. Luckily, this time it was not the Abdin Station but another, the Mouski District Police Station. In the howling mob that followed was a youth who spoke a few words of English. In his hands were sheets of the same stamps I had bought a few minutes earlier.

Into the *karakol* we trooped. This time, Allah was with me. The sergeant I confronted smiled at the accusations of the wild-eyed Egyptian who had seized me. When I showed my anti-Jewish stamps, and proclaimed that the Egyptians were the elite of all the Arabs, the English-speaking youth championed my cause. His voice could scarcely be heard, because by this time everyone, including the sergeant, was screaming at

the top of his lungs, trying to prove my innocence or guilt. I joined the grim fun. "Yahood, nix Yahood, no good!" I screamed above everybody else in makeshift Arabic. "Arabi good. Arabi good!" I put my right hand over my heart in token of my esteem for the Arab.

My new-found stamp-selling friend and the sergeant were convinced of my Arab patriotism. The fanatic who had hauled me in, and those who had swarmed after us, wanted me punished, Allah knows for what. During the melec, the sergeant winked, and motioned with his head toward the door. I took the hint, and slipped out at the height of the scrimmage. Several of the street mob were waiting outside. I passed them by with a smile and a greeting, waving the stamps before them.

I felt I was being followed, and tried devious methods to shake off anyone who might be trailing me. I was outwitted. A few blocks from the Continental, two bearded youths came up to me, one on each side. They spoke excellent English. They said they were students at Fouad University. Both were opposed to the anti-Jewish demonstration that had been taking place in Cairo. As a foreigner, did I not think such mob action was shameful?

I admonished them for their lack of patriotism. What manner of Moslems were they? To gain favor in the sight of Allah one must demonstrate against the Jews. "Even though I am a Christian, I swear by the holy beard of your Prophet that I wish the Jew nothing but ill luck during all his days on earth and in the hereafter. May Allah always smile with good fortune on the Arab cause."

The two changed tactics immediately. They were delighted to know that not all Americans were pro-Zionist. One of them, named Gamal—a tall, thin, wiry student—gave me his address and asked me to call on him. They shook my hand cordially. As we were about to part, a turbaned head leaned out of the window of the house in front of which we were standing. A voice asked the time.

"It is time for the evening prayer," Gamal said, and the dark face withdrew.

"Fiemen el lah (God be with you), good Amerikan."

"Fiemen el lah," I returned.

#### AHMED HUSSEIN—ARAB FUEHRER

HAVING had these indications of how Egypt treated the stranger, I warily began my investigation of Ahmed Hussein, fuehrer of the fanatic Green Shirts, more formally known as Misr el Fattat, the Young Egypt Party. I was sure I could meet Hussein by posing as a friend of those he knew in the United States. I knew Hussein's background. During the war he had been placed in custody for pro-Fascist sympathies. In 1942, with Rommel and his Afrika Korps hammering at El Alamein, one of Hussein's colleagues, a Green Shirt leader, led street demonstrations, screaming at the top of his voice: "Advance, Rommel. Please, Rommel, come quickly to Egypt."

Before the war Hussein had visited Italy, toured Fascist youth camps, and returned tremendously impressed. He also went to Germany, but got a cool reception. He then wrote a pamphlet, "Message to Hitler!" inviting Hitler to achieve peace of soul by embracing Islam, "the religion of God's unity and of solidarity, the religion of order and leadership."

In New York some of Hussein's writings were distributed by Habib Katibah (the same Katibah whom Shawa Bey in London asked me if I knew), who was frequently seen with Hussein when the latter visited the United States in 1947. Katibah's background is revealing. He had founded the Arab National League, a propaganda agency which received the endorsement of *World Service*, the notorious Nazi propaganda mill, for its efforts in "spreading the truth." Another founder, Dr. George Kheiralla, received assurances from James Wheeler-Hill, once Bund national secretary: "Our own organization

will work with you 100% and do whatever possible to assist you."

After Pearl Harbor the League was dissolved, but in 1945 Katibah suddenly reappeared on the letterhead of the streamlined Institute of Arab American Affairs, listing on its advisory board such prominent Americans as Kermit Roosevelt, Virginia C. Gildersleeve, dean emeritus, Barnard College; and William E. Hocking, professor emeritus, Harvard University. After a while Katibah's name disappeared from the letterhead, and was replaced by that of Khalil Totah as executive director. Katibah, however, remained very much on the scene.

As tension mounted in Palestine, Katibah, the extraordinary Benjamin H. Freedman<sup>4</sup> (whose name was originally listed on the Institute letterhead, but was later mysteriously X'd out), and R. M. Schoendorf—in reality Mrs. Freedman—sponsored a series of advertisements under the imprint of "The League for Peace With Justice in Palestine." An apostate Jew, Freedman's political views and extreme aversion for Zionism and his own people took such violent expression that he was esteemed by America's leading Jew-baiters, ranging from the psychopathic to a more dangerous variety. Merwin K. Hart joined Freedman's camp by devoting several issues of his bi-weekly bulletin to Freedman's fulminations that "a small minority of Jews has maneuvered itself into a position where it can use almost the whole of Western Christendom as its tool"; and that "Soviet Communism will succeed in its attempt to conquer the world in direct proportion to the support which America gives to Zionism."

While Hussein was lecturing in the United States, he was represented in court proceedings by a Brooklyn attorney named Hallam Maxon Richardson. Richardson, attorney for numerous "nationalist" clients, had once written an introduc-

<sup>4</sup>Freedman came into the news again in 1950, as one of the masterminds behind the abortive attempt to prove that Anna M. Rosenberg, chosen by Secretary of Defense George C. Marshall as U. S. manpower chief, was a Communist. Freedman later withdrew the fantastic charge.

(46) NTL

W.L.L.N. 1947 SEP 7 18

NLT AHMAD HUSSEIN

CAIRO (EGYPT) (VIA WUCABLES)

DEAREST BROTHER LETTER RECEIVED ATTENDING EVERYTHING REQUESTED VERY BUSY UNITED NATIONS SITUATION WRITING FULLY THIS WEEK EXTEND HIS EMINENCE WISHES FOR CONTINUED VISION COURAGE STRENGTH STRUGGLE BEHALF JUSTICE HIS PEOPLE GIVING HERE FULLEST COOPERATION FAMILY SENDS LOVE TO YOU ALL

BEN FREEDMAN 300P

460

SCH4 0975 P SCHOENDORF 300 CENTRAL PARK WEST NY 10027 R225

FROM FREEDMAN TO HUSSEIN

Cablegram sent by Benjamin Freedman to "Brother" Ahmed Hussein (the Arab agent who claimed that he came to our country with the Mufti's approval) in which Freedman pledges "His Eminence"—the Mufti—his "fullest cooperation."

The cable came to light during a court proceeding in which Hussein, as complaining witness, represented by Hallam Richardson, unsuccessfully sought to institute a prosecution for criminal libel against the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League of New York.

tion to a book by Joseph E. McWilliams, speaker at Bund meetings and fuhrer of the pro-Nazi Christian Mobilizers.<sup>5</sup> Hussein addressed a meeting for which invitations were sent by a Yorkville hate-monger who had been sentenced to the workhouse for participating in a meeting "tending towards a breach of the peace." Another speaker was Ernest F. Elmhurst, a veteran hand at the Nazi hate game, once indicted for subversive activities.<sup>6</sup> Thus, before leaving our hospitable shores, Hussein made his bow to some of our more distinguished citizens.

Shortly before he departed Hussein staged a banquet at the Hotel Commodore in New York. Katibah was toastmaster. Freedman was a speaker.<sup>7</sup> Richardson sat across the table from a friend of mine who later filed a detailed report of the proceedings. Hart was absent, but in the assortment of bigots and others was a surprising guest—Faris Bey el Khouri, leader of the Syrian delegation to the United Nations. The gathering was also honored by the presence of none other than the Mufti's political cohort, Azzam Pasha, to whom Captain Gordon-Canning referred me as his friend. Azzam Pasha praised Hussein as "a great leader, one who speaks from the heart." He added that he was delighted to have met "real Americans, the Americans in this room tonight." A weird note was struck by the presence of a tipsy American Army colonel.

<sup>5</sup> In 1943 McWilliams, with 29 others, was charged with conspiracy "to establish and aid in the establishment of national socialist or fascist forms of government in place of the forms of government then existing in the United States," and of carrying on "the objectives of said Nazi Party in the United States" by means of "a systematic campaign of propaganda designed and intended to undermine the loyalty and morale of the military and naval forces. . . ."

<sup>6</sup> Elmhurst was a defendant in the same trial with McWilliams. After a mistrial occasioned by the death of the judge, the indictment was dismissed.

<sup>7</sup> Freedman, represented by Richardson, testified at a court hearing in which a criminal libel complaint was sought against the Rev. Henry A. Atkinson, chairman of the Advisory Board of the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League, that he had paid half the bill for the banquet. He also testified that he had spent more than \$100,000 "of my own money" for pro-Arab advertisements and other propaganda.

Loudly, so that even Azzam Pasha heard, the colonel, gnawing on a cigar, growled repeatedly: "When we gonna hear some real Americans?"

Armed with these facts as to Hussein's background, one morning I went to the headquarters of the Green Shirts to see the Arab fuhrer, prepared to claim the friendship of those Americans he had met, even though they and I could not be farther apart.

## GREEN SHIRTS AND RED FEZZES



*"Our God is the strongest. We are not afraid to die. The Jews are cowards because they want to live. The Arabs would rather lose ten men than one gun. The Jews are the opposite. They want to save their lives and lose their guns. That is one difference between us."*

Moustafa, Holy Warrior

THE headquarters of the Green Shirts—more formally known as Misr el Fattat, the Young Egypt Party—was a two-storied building in the heart of Cairo, with a balcony flanked by Greek columns and Arabic grillwork. Passing a high iron fence decorated with the crescent of Islam, I entered a courtyard. Twin winding stairways led inside. I found Ahmed Hussein in his office.

He was a short, volatile, clean-cut man of about thirty-eight, with a round face and a thick brown mustache. He wore his tarboosh at a jaunty angle. His features were distinctly Semitic and light-complexioned. I introduced myself, told him I was a journalist, and explained my mission: "I want to study Arab life first-hand." Only Allah could forgive me for the fib I added: "I bring you greetings from Katibah and Freedman. They ask after your health."

Hussein's eyes lighted up. "Ahh, my brothers in America. How is Richardson?" And he went on to tell how he had sued

the *New York Post* for libel, and lost. "The Jews have all the power," he added. "It is the same in Egypt. When you see Richardson tell him that he has a place in my heart, always." Hussein's English was almost perfect.

He ordered demi-tasse, then leaned back and studied me. "May I see your passport?" he asked suddenly.

"Of course." I congratulated myself on having decided not to assume an undercover name. Truth would be my best defense and confound my enemies. My only fear was that Hussein might discover that I was also Carlson—he could easily ascertain this by writing to his New York friends—and learn that I was not only opposed to anti-Semitism, but had also exposed some of the Arab propaganda flooding our country in *The Plotters*. It would mean the end of my work—and perhaps even of me—for Hussein had powerful contacts in the government and the police of Cairo, not to mention a dangerous gestapo of his own.

"Whom else do you know in New York?" he asked, continuing to hold my passport.

At this moment the door opened, and four police stalked in. I nearly upset my coffee as I rose to my feet with Hussein. Two of the troupe wore the black wool uniforms I had come to detest; the others were in plain clothes, dressed as natively as our own FBI. Had they managed to trace me here? Had Hussein already been warned by cables from Katibah or Freedman?

Hussein set me at ease. "An hour before you arrived a bomb exploded in front of the building," he explained. "The police have come to investigate."

He ordered another round of coffee: good, strong, jet-black, bracing stuff, doubly welcome at that moment. The bomb, a small one, had gone off in the street. Damage was light. Hussein suspected the Ikhwan el Muslimin, the Moslem Brotherhood, a powerful terrorist group whose headquarters were only a block away. The police jotted down testimony, made a pretense at looking about the building, and went away.

Hussein and I were again alone. It seemed to me that the suspicion evident earlier had now died down. As we talked casually of our mutual impressions of Egypt and the United States, I could see that Hussein burned with a passion he could scarcely control. He was violently anti-British: "England is a senile criminal, a dirty country that pretends to be Egypt's friend. England is a bloodsucker that could not be decent even if she tried," Hussein declared. His voice rose to an oratorical fervor: "The slogan of Misr el Fattat is 'Glory to Egypt!' Egypt is the mother of ideas. For four thousand years we have given birth to ideas. We want to make Egypt a nation at the top of all the nations of the earth! I want to see Egypt greater than America, Britain, and Russia!"

I asked him why the Arabs were so deeply religious.

"Our religion is a simple one. It needs no interpreters. We believe in Allah, Master of the world, who holds in his hand the destiny of all people, and of everything. Every piece of paper fluttering in the wind is destined to fall at an appointed spot. Your visit was pre-destined. You came here because Allah led your steps here. What you Americans call fatalism is the very thing that makes us strong. We do not think for ourselves, but place our fate in the hands of Allah. We go through fire, and face a bullet without fear because we know that Allah wills our destiny. We are not afraid of the future. We live today, or die tomorrow. We eat, or not. It is all in the hands of Allah. Our mind, our body, our soul, our life, everything we are and hope to be, belongs to the Master. We are creatures of His will, and have no will of our own over our daily actions, or over our destiny. This is what our religion and our Prophet teach us!"

I nodded sympathetically. Hussein looked at me for a moment, then got up and locked the door. "I am glad to talk to you. I must thank my American brothers for sending you. Now an Arab," he resumed, "is affected more by his feelings than by reason. He is easy to get along with if you understand him. He is ugly if you cross him. The Jews have crossed us—

١٠ جمادى الثانية سنة ١٣٦٧ - ١٩ أبريل سنة ١٩٤٨

# التسكن صبيحتنا

## جزء وفاء لهذا الوحش والبربرية

لنكن صبيحتنا الموت  
للمهونين ، في كل مكان لافي  
فلسطين بل في مصر وفي سوريا  
وفي العراق وشرق الأردن وبل  
قطر عربي فقد ابى الصهيونيون  
الا ان يخرجوا من دائرة البرية  
وتحوّلوا الى حيوانات منقرضة  
قدرة لم يعهد لها البشر من قبل

والمسلمين  
وانفق اليهود على قرية دير  
يسن فديحا نساها واطفائها  
وهم يهاجمون الان بالطائرات  
والصناعات والمدافع الثقيلة .  
وفي خلال ذلك لازال  
الغريبون المجرمون يجمعون من  
جديد للمناقشة والمداولة في حق

بصير

احمد حسين

او الهيات الدولية . فلماذا  
ناشدتكم الله ... لماذا جيل بيتي

ستسبل لدفع الشر الا بالقوة  
والتحدى . وصهيونيومصر والبلاد  
العربية يجب ان يدفعوا ثمن  
جرائم اخوانهم في فلسطين .  
هل ارتفع صوت صهيوني في  
مصر يعلن استنكاره والشهزازه  
من هذه المذبحة الثانية هل  
ارتعدت فرانسهم على الاقل من



and by the will of Allah that is a blessing in disguise. The Jews have brought the Arabs together. We are united. The world will respect us when we show our power. After we liberate the Arab world from the English and the Jew, we'll liberate the whole Moslem world from imperialism." His large brown eyes on fire, Hussein seemed to derive orgiastic pleasure from these visions. "Then we will have peace. The fire of unity burns in us. A peasant may not be ready to fight tomorrow, but he is ready to be killed today. Peasants used to mutilate themselves to avoid military duty. Now they volunteer. They are mad with the joy to die for Allah. As for the Zionist Jew . . ." Hussein picked up an issue of *Misr el Fattat*, the publication of the Green Shirts, and interpreted to me as he read:

LET OUR MOTTO BE:

DEATH FOR THE ZIONISTS EVERYWHERE

AS JUST RETRIBUTION FOR THEIR BARBARISM

The Zionists are behaving like wild filthy beasts and they must therefore be treated as such. . . . Are we to be slaughtered like sheep by the Zionists and do nothing? We must cut their throats as they cut ours. It is our duty to slaughter the Zionists in Egypt as just retribution for Zionist atrocities in Palestine. We must burn their homes and their shops and then hold them as hostages and kill ten Zionists every time an Arab child or woman in Palestine is murdered by the Zionist beast.

I was back the next day—with my camera. As I waited to see Hussein, one of his aides listed for me the basic Green Shirt principles: "Talk only Arabic. . . . Buy your goods from an Egyptian. . . . Wear clothes made in Egypt. . . . Eat Egyptian food. . . ." At this moment Hussein sent word that he wanted to see me, and I was ushered hastily into his office. Half a dozen others were there. I was asked to sit down. They stared openly at me, talked among themselves, and then to Hussein. He replied heatedly, and turned to me.

"Some of our members think you are a Jew. Others think you were sent here as a spy. I have told them that you come from our brothers in America. You do not know Arabic: a good spy would know Arabic. I have also told them that you are not an American, but an Armenian. As for me, I say you are not a spy."

"Please tell your friends," I said, "that I am honored to have your hospitality, but if you do not wish to grant it further, I shall take my leave in peace, and wish you well. I am in Egypt to study your way of life, and to write about it. If I see good I shall write good things. Instead of spending my time at night-clubs, with women, with English propagandists, I have come to you for my education." This was the truth. "I do not seek your secrets. For my part, my life is as open to you as it is to Allah."

Hussein interpreted my remarks, then turning to me, said:

"You are the first American who has tried to understand us by coming to live among us. You are welcome. We think you must have Moslem blood. You do not smoke or drink, or eat pork. You think like an Arab, you are beginning to look like an Arab, and you already talk like one of us."

After this I was treated with a certain deference.

Hussein eyed my camera. "We would like you to take our pictures," he said.

This was what I had hoped for. I took a shot of Hussein with a group of his associates, and then we went outside, where I photographed him seated proudly at the wheel of his green Ford. One of the men introduced to me as Hassan Sobhy, an officer of *Misr el Fattat*, took me aside. "I am an important man around here," he said. "Take a big picture of me." I did so.

Later, back in the headquarters, while I was talking to Sobhy, he interrupted the conversation to spread a newspaper on the floor and go through the series of knee-bending afternoon prayers. A faithful Moslem is required to pray five times a day—the first prayer before sunrise, or if that is not possible,

at least early in the morning, followed by prayers in early afternoon, late afternoon, at sundown, and again an hour after sunset, in each instance accompanied by appropriate obeisances, or *rak'aa*.

The pictures I took turned out well, and eventually I photographed nearly every Green Shirt of importance. As I walked in and out of headquarters, almost daily, I was trusted more and more. I discovered the Green Shirts had adequate finances—from political leaders, sheikhs, and others. A wealthy Cairo landowner had sponsored Hussein's trip to the United States. The Green Shirts were largely financed by Jew-hating individuals and organizations formed to combat Zionism and the formation of the new Jewish state. According to the April 19, 1948 issue of *Misr el Fattat*, former Prime Minister Ali Maher Pasha, who was interned during the war for "reasons relating to the safety and security of the State," contributed £200.

#### ST. PATRICK'S DAY WITH THE GREEN SHIRTS

A FEW days later, without explanation, Hussein said: "Be sure you are with us tomorrow. Bring your camera."

Tomorrow was St. Patrick's Day and kismet had willed that just that day I was to witness a Green Shirt parade through Cairo's streets the like of which no Irishman ever dreamed. Early the next afternoon we drove off in Hussein's Ford, across one of the bridges spanning the languid Nile, to a large open field. Youths in the Green Shirt "Boy Scout" uniforms were already lined up with banners and trumpets, waiting for their fuhrer. Two plainclothesmen who suddenly appeared at my elbow began to glare at me. I appealed to Hussein.

"Do not worry, I will explain that you are our official photographer," he said. "They will be with you all afternoon." To be sure I would have no trouble, he produced a green beret carrying the *Misr el Fattat* insignia, and I wore it.

A dust cloud became visible in the distance. A welcoming shout went up. It turned out to be a column of soldiers, marching with their banners in the wind—a contingent of about two hundred volunteers bound for Palestine under *Misr el Fattat* auspices. They were dressed in war-surplus khaki and the Arab headpiece—consisting of the flowing white shawl, *khaffiya*, held down around the temples by twin black cords. Their faces were bronzed by the Nile sun, their hands bony from toil. They were *fellaheen*—those lowest in the social scale, usually tenant-slave farmers or unskilled workers. They joined the Green Shirt columns, and together marched past a guard of honor of Green Shirt officials. I began to photograph the scene with one policeman behind me, the other at my side. Suddenly, as the massed banners and flags passed by, a dozen Green Shirt arms shot out in the old-fashioned Fascist salute. To snap or not to snap! What would the police say? Nervously, I took two photographs of the saluting soldiers. Nothing happened.

As the contingents marched toward the Nile, I jumped into Hussein's car with Sheikh Mahmoud Abou el Azaayim, a wealthy Egyptian who was financing the volunteers. We drove ahead to Hussein's home on the other side of the bridge. His apartment commanded a magnificent view of the Nile, and the famous Pyramids of Giza in the distance.

"Take a picture of my daughters," Hussein said. "I have named them Faith and Liberty." Hussein's wife was nowhere in evidence, faithful to the Moslem tradition that no decent woman ever shows her face to strangers. In his military dress and cap, hands on hips, jaw stuck out, Hussein on the balcony of his home imitated Il Duce. Hussein had neither the girth, the stature, the jaw, nor the snarl of the Italian Fascist whom he admired and tried to emulate.

It was now the turn of Sheikh el Azaayim to pose for me. In our country, thanks to Hollywood, the word "sheikh" suggests a virile, handsome son of the desert dashing about on a full-blooded Arab charger. Undoubtedly there are some Val-

entino-like sheikhs. Nearly all I saw were quite the opposite.<sup>1</sup> The sheikh took his place on Hussein's balcony and stood at attention, reviewing his troops. Even in the glorious Nile sunset that transformed the whole Giza area into magic beauty, he appeared to be what he was—one of the ugliest men in Egypt.

He was a stunted man, somewhat over five feet tall, draped in a black cape reaching to his ankles. His fez was wound around with a creamy white linen fabric so that only the red top showed. His beady little eyes, embedded in a sickly, yellow-brown face, looked at me craftily. A scraggly mustache covered his upper lip, and a thin beard the nakedness of his receding chin. His lips were thick, his ears large. The little man showed his full glory when he opened his mouth, revealing a set of long, uneven, canine-shaped yellow teeth, and sending forth a variety of unpleasant odors.

But I did not underestimate the sheikh. He was wealthy, owning extensive share-cropping lands in El Minya, south of Cairo. He claimed descent (more common than our Mayflower cult) directly from Mohammed, the Prophet. His *fellaheen* believed that he was immortal, and therefore immune to bullets, and that his touch bestowed upon them a similar state of grace. Consequently, not only because of Egypt's social laws, but also because of his own exalted person, Sheikh el Azaayim owned his slaves body and soul. Blinded by fanaticism, believing themselves bearing charmed lives, and hopelessly untrained for war, they were now being sent by him to slaughter. He called them Followers of Truth.

"I shall lead them in battle personally," the sheikh explained to me through an Egyptian army captain who had joined us. Obviously taking no stock in his own immortality, or in that of his men, he added: "I will be with them to the end. If they fall, others will come. It has so been arranged. If

<sup>1</sup> Sheikh is the title given the headman of a village, or a religious authority. The title today is loosely used.

I die, after me my brother, after him my younger brother, and so on down the family line until Palestine is liberated."

As we watched from the balcony, the Followers of Truth marched across the bridge in long thin columns, their *khaffiyas* flowing in the wind, their banners proclaiming in huge Arabic letters: GO AND FIGHT THE JEWS . . . THE ARMY OF ALLAH GOING TO FREE PALESTINE . . . I WANT TO COME WITH YOU. While the two fuehrers stood side by side with me, waving from the balcony, the columns marched to Misr el Fattat headquarters.

That St. Patrick's night, I witnessed the weirdest briefing session any American could hope to see. Green Shirts and Followers of Truth filled the courtyard, so that not even a crow could find a resting-place. On the iron fence was a banner, reading: THE ARMY OF MOHAMMEDAN GOD. FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE. The light from two gas-lamps eerily highlighted the bronzed features and the white headdress of these Nile warriors, as a half dozen orators waited to set off the fiery flames of a Holy War.

From eight o'clock on, for two hours, speaker after speaker mesmerized them with the most extraordinary supercharged emotional oratory I have heard in ten years of hearing the best among our worst Americans. The average Arab is highly emotional and responds quickly to the rhythm of poetry, and the passion of oratory. The Arabic language itself is highly poetic. In addition, its repetitious phrases, its changing cadence from deep guttural to sustained high-pitched tremolo, conveys a deep, earthy, angry explosiveness. The effect over a period of time is overpowering. It seemed to me the words were like savage thrusts into the night. They were like flying stilettos jabbing at my senses. I understood only a few words—*Allah*, *Yahood*, *Falastine* (Palestine), *attl*, *attl* (kill, kill), *Mujahed* (Holy Warrior), *Jchad* (Holy War)—but I felt the impact of every word, and the crackling thunder of every sentence as it ripped and lashed out into the night.

One speaker was a true firebrand. He was a thin wisp of a man, with a small, thin, pointed beard. His long deep-copper-colored face glowed with religious frenzy. His eyes, long-lashed and mystic, were half-shut when he spoke, the lids velvety as if touched by purple eye-shadow. He made no gestures and scarcely moved even his head. He mixed pure fire with his words, and as he spoke he swayed slightly with the fluid rhythm of his words, as a cobra sways, at times speaking in a kind of hypnotic singsong—half prayer, half chant—then suddenly, his voice as brutal as a mailed fist, he exhorted, demanded, beat with the hammer of his eloquence on the ears of his men to fight for Allah and His Prophet. His words were like the thunder of a savage symphony, piercing the listeners and the darkness beyond, awakening every ear that heard the extraordinary virulence of his extraordinary passion. . . .

As he finished, the bowels of the earth seemed to explode. The roar that came from the frenzied listeners is utterly undecipherable to American ears. The least I can say is that it was like the snarling of volcanic monsters, bloodcurdling, awesome. The white-turbaned faces, roasted under the Nile sun, burned with the zealous fire of Islam; wherever I looked men stood screaming, shouting, eyes bloodshot, ready at that moment to tear out the hearts of their foe with bare hands in the name of Allah and the Holy War.

From the balcony an arm rose high, commanding silence. In the hushed moment that followed, a voice cracked: "Ahmed Hussein!"

Hussein was an intense speaker. With powerful gestures and deep emotion he rekindled the religious frenzy of his listeners.

"Death to Palestine's Jews!" he bellowed.

"Death to Palestine's Jews!" the mob roared back.

He exhorted them against British occupation of the Suez and the Sudan. The mob thundered its approval. As Hussein ended with the familiar words, *Jihad, att!! att!!* the same vibrant voice in the rear called out in Arabic:

"Hussein, our leader; Hussein, our savior; Hussein, protector of Egypt!"

Once again the monsters thundered into the night, the echoes reverberating from Cairo's moon-bathed rooftops.

The briefing was over. The Holy War was launched. The emotional crescendo on which this rally had ended found everyone perspiring, ecstatic, savage, ready to dismember any Jew, or burn his home. I could understand now how it was possible, after such meetings, for inflamed mobs to pour into Cairo's Jewish quarter, and smash and destroy Jewish shops. Hussein himself had incited a number of such riots on Friday, the Moslem Sunday, after his prayers. Cairo police with black shields and long black whips stopped such riotings—after the "patriotic" fury had spent itself.

#### MY MEETING WITH MOUSTAFA

LATER in the night I met Moustafa. He was to remain my friend throughout my sojourn with the Arabs, and save me from many a dangerous situation. I believe that if I were to meet Moustafa today—despite my many references to him, some uncomplimentary—he would embrace me as a friend, and not thrust a knife in me.

Moustafa wasn't much to look at, and my nose usually told me when he was near. He was a tall, well-muscled man of twenty-eight, with a deep-olive skin, a flat nose and a long upper lip covered with a bristly mustache that always looked like an untrimmed hedge. His eyes were like blazing coals, even when he was relaxed. He could become savage, as I was to witness on the Palestinian front later. The best I can say about Moustafa's sex life is that, although he was fully normal in the Western sense, he was also normal in the Arabic sense. Moustafa had the usual vices common to man and soldier. What made him unusual were the virtues of loyalty, honesty, and a kindness that he displayed unfailingly toward me.

I liked this big shaggy soldier the minute I saw him. Though his hand played tricks, it was never with my possessions. Basically his character was honest and simple, uncorrupted by the greed and venality about him. Moustafa never professed to be religious: I never saw him kneel in prayer. A one-time captain in the Egyptian army, he had been born into a farming family of small landowners. They had given him a good elementary-school education, and in addition he could read and write English—rare among Egyptians. But he was a natural-born fighter and detested farm work. When I met him he had just returned from an expedition: his next assignment—due to come within a few weeks—was to lead the Green Shirt contingents and Followers of Truth into Palestine and make guerrilla attacks on Jewish outposts.

I had planned to go later to Palestine by myself; but when I heard this news, I made a quick decision. How much better to go with Moustafa and his men! How much better to be an intimate part of the Arab guerrilla movement, than to go as the typical reporter, always the outsider and stranger. I broached the subject to Moustafa. "I will come along as your photographer," I suggested. A few days later, after we found we hit it off well together, he agreed. When he and his men would leave for Palestine, I would go with them.

"I will arrange it with Ahmed Hussein," Moustafa said.

I quizzed him on his views on Zionism.

"We are fighting because Palestine is our land and we want to die there. Even if all the world helps the Jews we know we will win because our God is the strongest. We are not afraid to die. The Jews are cowards because they want to live. The Arab would rather lose ten men than one gun. The Jews are the opposite. They want to save their lives and lose their guns. That is one difference between us. Besides, we have plenty of money," Moustafa went on. "Plenty of ammunition. Plenty of men. We even have a Tiger tank we stole from the British."

"How did you manage that?"

"We paid £500 to English soldiers who were riding in the

tank. They stopped and went into the bushes where we paid them the money. When they came out the tank was gone. Don't think we are without friends," Moustafa continued. "We have English deserters and Germans fighting with us. They make some of our bombs. We also have Czechs and Yugoslavs spying for us. They go right into Tel Aviv and tell us how things are. They are fine spies."

At Green Shirt headquarters, Moustafa introduced me to a fiery Egyptian who was training the volunteers. His name was Izzed-een Abdul Kader. He told me, Moustafa interpreting, that he had once tried to kill Nahas Pasha, now prime minister of Egypt, because Nahas opposed the Green Shirts. "They put him in jail for that," Moustafa said dolefully, while Izzed-een watched me with his little, suspicious, red-rimmed eyes. "He is willing to kill anybody who is an enemy of Misr el Fattat. He is a very strong patriot."

"Will he kill me if he thinks I'm your enemy?" I asked curiously.

Moustafa spoke to him, then turned to me and translated his reply with a smile: "If he knows you to be a Jew or a spy, he will not only kill you, but he will drink your blood."

With this comforting thought I left Misr el Fattat headquarters for a long night of note-making. I had to arrange matters so I could go along to Palestine with Moustafa and his men. There were thousands of these volunteers and adventurers from all the Arab countries, armed and financed by pashas, sheikhs, or the Arab League, trained on Egyptian army grounds by regular army officers on leave. Their role was to harass the Jew, cut off his communications, isolate settlements, strip and weaken him for the moment, now only a few weeks off, when the British would leave Palestine and the entire Arab world would declare a bloody, open season on the Jew. Then the regular Arab armies would invade Palestine and settle once and for all the impudent and fantastic Zionist dream of a Jewish state on Arab soil.

Hussein had good news for me a few days later. Delighted

with my pictures of the parade, and also those of his daughters Faith and Liberty, he insisted that I come along to a Green Shirt rally to be held at nearby Damanhur. "In 1936 the people there almost killed me because I was anti-British. Now they are begging me to come and speak to them. Come and see—and bring your camera."

### A GLIMPSE OF NATIVE LIFE

WE DROVE to Damanhur, a few hours distant, and the trip was an education in itself. I saw graphic evidence of the curses that have tortured Egypt since the days of the Pharaohs—poverty, ignorance, disease, feudalism. I saw squat, sunbaked villages with bleached mud huts, with streams of sewage flowing into side canals. Swarms of half-naked children, their skin covered with running sores, raced in and out of the huts and the filth. In the fields, the *fellaheen* worked in back-breaking, dawn-to-dark toil for three hundred and fifty-five days of the year, with only ten days off for feast days. The mode of living, agriculture, and irrigation had changed but little in the last five thousand years. Their life expectation was less than thirty-one years.<sup>2</sup> There were seventeen million *fellaheen* in Egypt—surely among the most miserable human beings on earth. I saw these wretched subhuman Egyptians digging a ditch: they were scooping the earth by hand and throwing it into fiber baskets. I saw them irrigating a field: one *fellah* was scooping water from the canal into an earthen pot, passing it to a *fellah* above him, who poured it into the irrigation ditch. I saw a young woman squat along the road and pass her water: then she let her skirts fall, and resumed her walk. Men and children used the walls of their pathetic homes as public latrines. The nauseating odor of human urine and excrement

<sup>2</sup> According to the World Health Organization report of August 10, 1949.

followed us from Cairo to Damanhur and back. I saw an elderly woman walking with a heavy steel rod balanced on her head: riding ahead of her on a donkey was her husband. I saw a *fellah* lying in the shade, a monkey neatly picking lice from his master's head. As we drove past a train station, we saw children who had tied a scrawny dog to the tracks and were gleefully awaiting the approaching train. In a land where children are beaten and abused, affection for an animal is unheard of, and savagery is the rule of life.

As I watched this changing yet always horrifying scene, Hussein turned to me for a moment. "Well," he said. "Now you see a part of Egypt the tourist doesn't see. What do you think of all this?"

I answered honestly. "Frankly, Ahmed, I'm shocked."

"Only a revolution can change it. The Young Egypt Party will do it some day," Hussein said.

"*Insh'allah*, my friend, *Insh'allah!* With God's help!"

We arrived in Damanhur early in the afternoon, and proceeded to a *midan*, clearing, on one side of which was a mosque topped by an extraordinarily lovely minaret. It was the hour of prayer, and the muezzin was at his place on the tiny balcony. With both hands cupped behind his ears, palms to the front and forefingers up, he intoned the call to prayer in a deep drawn-out, wailing chant: "*Allah akbar, Allah akbar, Allah akbar; ashadu an la ilaha illa-llah, ashadu anna Muhammadarrasulullah. . . . Hayya'alas-sala.* Allah is great, Allah is great, Allah is great; testify there is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet. . . . Come to prayer."

The Green Shirts were already on hand, with a small army of police. Some Green Shirts carried daggers at their belts. Others carried long heavy wooden bats. There was a horde of bootblacks, and dispensers of purple and yellow fruit drinks, serving all comers from two glasses given a token rinse now and then in a pail of water. Scores of men were milling about a huge tent, made colorful with oriental rugs draped from the poles. This was a cool, snug inclosure, festooned with

flaps and lined with chairs and benches. A large crowd was already seated inside. Within half an hour the tent was packed. The audience overflowed upon the *midan*, with grimy, barefooted children dressed in tatters swarming about its edges.

I thought it significant that most of the crowd of about two thousand were young people, under forty. A variety of speakers, ranging from youths to seasoned rabble-rousers, harangued them. Two orators ended their speeches with the Fascist salute. Hussein, in excellent form, spoke on "The Strength of Power." After him—he was applauded and cheered to the echo—I heard the poet laureate of Misr el Fattat, a handsome man with long, flowing hair. I have never listened to poetry recited with more compelling eloquence. I could understand only a few words, of course, but I found myself almost as moved as his audience. Here was art made universal, and translation almost superfluous. Time and again he was stopped, and compelled to recite entire stanzas over and over. The audience listened enraptured, breaking in with shouts of encouragement, or ecstatically moaning: "Allah! Allah!" and "Yahya! Yahya! Live on. Live on. May your kind multiply." Later I had one of the poems translated:

I see Palestine thirsty for water.  
I call to it: Come, Palestine, drink with me,  
Because I have a large quantity of water.  
Come Palestine, come Palestine,  
And bring with you your fire—  
To set me on fire. Old iron takes its strength with fire.  
Pour your fire in my heart and breast.

We are as dust in air. America never cared for us,  
And commanded that all the Jews in the world  
Be collected and placed on our frontier as a flag of victory.  
What are we going to do?  
If we remain asleep, time is lost, and heaven,

Which we think makes all things, never works for a lazy man.  
Heaven says: Begin your work, and I continue for you!

As we drove back, I complimented Hussein on his success. "Twelve years ago they nearly killed me in Damanhur," he said triumphantly. "Twelve years from now I will come again—as the Kemal Ataturk of Egypt."

Decorum demanded that I say again: "Insh'allah, Insh'allah."

## THE MOSLEM (BLACK) BROTHERHOOD



*"Ours is the highest ideal, the holiest cause and the purest way. Those who criticize us have fed from the tables of Europe. They want to live as Europe has taught them—to dance, to drink, to revel, to mix the sexes openly and in public."*

Sheikh Hassan el Banna  
Supreme Guide, Moslem Brotherhood

A FEW days later Moustafa looked at me and said: "Artour, when you first came we thought you were a spy because you looked like an American. Now I gaze at your face. I find it is as dark as ours. You have a mustache. You dress like us. You eat with us. You are one of us, Artour. I can now call you *akhi*, brother." With this Moustafa placed his hand on my shoulder affectionately. I had "arrived."

It delighted me to know this, for it meant I had taken on sufficient Arab coloration to attempt getting inside the Ikhwan el Muslimin—the Moslem (often called the Black) Brotherhood<sup>1</sup>—the ultra-fanatically religious Moslem group, which even the Green Shirts feared, and which they suspected had placed the bomb that exploded in front of their headquarters the day I first called on Hussein. The Moslem Brotherhood was, in fact, far larger, far more powerful, and far more deadly

<sup>1</sup> The American organization called "The Moslem Brotherhood of the U.S.A." has no connection with the Ikhwan el Muslimin. My references are to the Egyptian organization only.

than the Green Shirts. Most of its members wore beards, because Mohammed had worn one, and the day after Moustafa spoke to me I began to raise a beard in preparation for my adventure in fanaticism.

The next week Hussein glared at me angrily when I came to see him.

"Shave off your beard!" he snapped. "The political police will think you are trying to change your appearance. Besides, you are beginning to look like a member of the Ikhwan." The Ikhwan, he said, was a curse upon Egypt. "They are dangerous. They always look backward. We look forward. Egypt will never progress by looking back over its shoulder and trying to live in yesterday's world." And he added: "I tell you, shave it off now if you want to remain with us."

*Ma'alesh!* No matter! I shaved off the beard.

Hussein had nothing but hatred for Sheikh Hassan el Banna, the Moorshid, or Supreme Guide of the Ikhwan. Hussein spoke of him as the Rasputin of Egypt. They charged him with accepting money from the British as well as the Communists. They ascribed to him many immoralities, sexual and otherwise, as well as violence and intrigues without number. And the Ikhwan had no love for the Green Shirts.

To me this made the challenge all the more intriguing. I went ahead with undercover plans to gain the confidence of the Ikhwan. This meant keeping the left hand from knowing what the right was doing, for Ikhwan headquarters were only a short block away. If I were seen there by Hussein's scouts, I'd be charged with consorting with the enemy. If Ikhwan prowlers saw me at Green Shirt headquarters, they would suspect me of collaborating with Hussein, whom they considered a pro-Western quisling because of his visits to Europe and the United States. The Ikhwan had its own smear methods. A critic or opponent was not called a "Communist" or a "Jew"; he was damned as a "European who has caten the crumbs from the tables of Europe."

I had heard that El Banna had a large following among the



students of Fouad University. This gave me an idea. Might not Gamal be a member—Gamal, one of the two bearded students who had followed me the second time I had been arrested for taking pictures? I had put his address aside with little thought that it would ever be useful.

I called upon him in one of the native residential sections of the city, and he greeted me warmly and ceremoniously. "Ahhh, welcome, American friend who loves the Arab cause," he intoned. "Allah yaateek el-afiah. Mit ahlan wa sahlam. May God grant you good health. Welcome a hundred times."

"Moutta shakker. Allah yebarek feek. Thank you. May God bless you," I said, using the Arab phrases Moustafa had been teaching me. "I have come to ask your help to meet Sheikh Hassan el Banna, who I have heard is a great and noble man. I wish to bring the *Moorshid* the greetings of Americans who are one with the Arab cause."

My hunch was right. Gamal was a member of the Ikhwan. He would be happy, he said, to arrange matters. Would I meet him the following night at nine p.m. at Ikhwan headquarters? This seemed perfect, for Green Shirt scouts would be less likely to see me going there at night.

The next evening a taxi brought me noisily to a large two-story white house, its ornate Moorish architecture etched in the moonlight. There was a guardhouse at the corner. A high iron fence surrounded the building. All about were dark, bearded figures in *gallabiyas* and others in the garb of El Azhar (Moslem Theological Seminary) students. Two uniformed policemen with rifles stood at the entrance. The dim light from a corner street-lamp made the square and the figures lurking in the shadows an eerie and conspiratorial scene. Apparently they were waiting for someone. I wondered if they were waiting for me.

I approached the entrance slowly, with a little uneasiness at the pit of my stomach, trying to sense intuitively what my eyes could not see. Then I stopped, and waited. One of the policemen strolled over to me. For a moment it seemed as if

dark, mysterious figures were closing in on all sides. I called out sharply in a loud voice: "Gamal houna? Where is Gamal?" At the mention of Gamal's name, the crowd seemed to melt away; two men came up to me, ceremoniously led me into a courtyard, then up a flight of stairs to a room on the second floor. There Gamal waited, with half a dozen other youths, all bearded like himself.

He shook hands cordially.

"You have made us happy tonight by your visit," he said, and introduced me to the others. They were all fellow students at Fouad University. Then he ordered coffee.

"We know another American. He has written us," one of the Arabs said.

"Maybe I know him," I remarked. "What's his name?"

The student produced a letter addressed to "Shawa Pasha" of the Moslem Brotherhood, and signed by William T. Frary of Boston. Beginning "In the name of Allah, the Merciful," Frary went on to offer his public-relations services to the Ikhwan.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> William T. Frary, 42, was adopted by a woman twice his age, the Baroness Adelheid Maria von Blomberg, "daughter of Baron Hugo von Blomberg, poet and painter of renown," according to Frary. Frary-von Blomberg achieved some notoriety in 1942 while addressing the Hempstead, Long Island, Rotary Club, when he asserted that "Nazi troops are well disciplined and are incapable of committing atrocities." This and other remarks were construed as pro-Nazi and aroused Rotary members to protest his talk as "German propaganda."

In a publicity release prepared by himself, the former Boston press agent touted himself as a "business executive" and "international relations counsel." He claimed to have been public-relations counsel to the National Restaurant Association, the National Fisheries Association, and the Armenian National Committee, a defunct adjunct of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation.

He stated he had been "sent on a special mission to the Vatican, Germany, and London; accompanied Balkan Investigation Committee in Greece"; visited "Arabia as guest of the Saudi-Arabian Government and Aramco . . . appointed spokesman for twelve million German expellees, honorary member Polish Home Army, US delegate for Society for Defense of Christianity." He claimed to have "conferred" with the Duke of Windsor, General Franco, General de Gaulle, Chancellor Figl of Austria, and Marshal Mannerheim of Finland.

"He was here; he knows the Arab subject very well," the Arab said.

I was ruminating on what a small world this was after all, when I was asked if I knew "Sheikh Lutz." The name was strangely familiar.

"I once met an American in California who became a Moslem," I said. "Could it be . . ."

"The very same. His name was Lutz. We gave him a Moslem name—Sheikh Abdur Rahman Lutz. He is a Moslem Brother."<sup>3</sup>

I had met Edward Abdur Rahman Lutz in San Francisco. He was a burly man with an innocent face, a former Sunday-school teacher in a Congregational church. He had become impressed with "the compassion, the charity of the true Moslem," while working with an oil company in Saudi Arabia, and became a convert to Mohammedanism. He hoped to found a mosque in Sacramento. In the name of "God, the Merciful, the Compassionate," he was also out to collect ten million dollars to establish an Islamic university; he told me he also made suggestions to various Arab embassies to improve their public relations.

By the time I was ready to leave the students I had made such progress that it was agreed that I should have the privilege of meeting the *Moorshid* himself the next day. Gamal meanwhile explained that the Ikhwan had 350,000 members and 1,500 branches in Egypt alone. He estimated there were an additional 150,000 members outside Egypt.

"We believe only in the teachings and the ways of the Koran," Gamal explained. "All truth is in the Koran. We believe the Arab nations have failed to win their independence because they have fallen from the teachings of the Koran. All that is modern goes against the Koran and is therefore dangerous to Egypt."

The next day, although I showed up at the appointed time,

<sup>3</sup> It must not be assumed that Lutz necessarily shared the political views or condoned the terrorist practices of the Ikhwan.

neither Gamal nor El Banna appeared. I was disappointed, but was not too put out, for most Arabs are rather careless about keeping appointments. It's not unusual for them to be an hour or two late. Fortunately, I found one of the English-speaking students whom I had met the night before.

"Assalamu aleikum," he said. "Peace be upon you."

"Wa aleikum salam," I answered. "And upon you peace."

I made myself at home in a large reception room in order to study the faces about me. It was an interesting if not entirely comforting sight. I was surrounded by what were undoubtedly some of Egypt's most vicious thugs, who were studying me with as much grim interest as I was them. Here were zealots of every description—ultra-nationalist, ultra-religionist, ultra-fanatic Moslems who had vowed to make every day a day of *Jihad* against nonbelievers. From every Arab country, from North Africa to Pakistan, they were flowing into the Cairo headquarters: Arab trigger-men carrying daggers and pistols; men from the Sudan with their cheeks slashed; fighters from the Sinai desert; recruiters from Palestine; gun-runners; spies; lice-ridden Bedouins from everywhere. Greasy, bearded men with diseased eyes and mutilated faces, crude and barbaric, all sat sullenly, sizing up the *Amrikani*. The fires of fanaticism had consumed them deeply, and the flames had burned out all warmth and humanity from their faces. They said nothing—only sat there in sullen silence in my presence. The most antifooreign, murderous crew in Egypt, to whom nothing counted but the Koran, the sword of Islam, and the dictates of their *Moorshid*. Compared to these, it seemed to me, Hussein's Green Shirt legions were cherubic angels.

#### "MY MEN WILL TEACH YOU TO KILL"

SEATED next to me was a fiercely mustachioed giant of a man, with a face bronzed by the desert sun, his eyes fearless

and hawklike. I could tell by his gray turban and flowing, gray-black *burnous* that he was a Bedouin from the desert, and at the same time a sheikh of El Azhar. I had caught a glimpse of him the previous night. Now he was whiling away his time by toying with the *sibha*, a string of large oval amber beads, used by the Arabs to count their prayers and also to work off nervous energy. Fascinated, I watched his enormous hands, capable of choking a throat as easily as crushing an egg, as he endlessly slipped bead after bead through his fingers. He put away the beads and dug his hand deep into the folds of a pocket inside the voluminous *burnous*. It emerged with a handful of heavy-caliber bullets. His other hand dipped, and came out clutching a Belgian automatic. He placed this in his lap and patted it fondly.

"Allah! I paid £20 for this, and I won't have my money's worth until I have killed twenty Jews. One pound, one Jew."

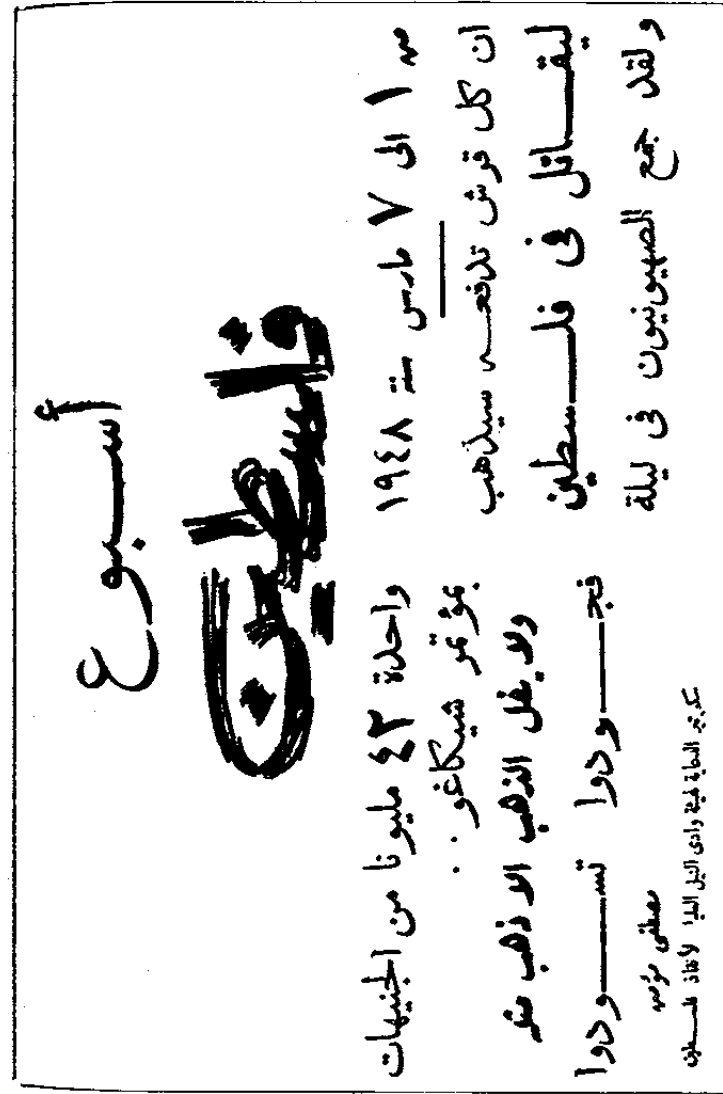
This pleasant observation was translated for me by another neighbor, a police lieutenant who had replaced my student friend. I suspected he had taken a seat near me to watch me more closely, and I played my hand accordingly.

"How many have you killed so far?" I asked the Bedouin.

"With my rifle, four. With the knife, two." He held up his fingers each time. "That is not enough in the sight of Allah. I have come to Cairo to buy heavy arms. With these we shall have a blood feast." He apparently took a fancy to me. "You are the first American I have liked," he said. "You do not display Western manners. You do not have superior ways. I feel toward you as a brother. You talk like an Arab. Allah, you look like an Arab. I want you to visit me in the Negev," he said quite suddenly. He was evidently in earnest, because he gave me his name, which I carefully copied down—Sheikh Younis Hussein Mohammed—and detailed instructions for reaching his desert stronghold, near Falouja, above the Palestine-Egyptian border. Leaning over, he asked what kind of gun I carried.

"I shoot only with my cameras," I said. "I need no guns."

"You are a brave American, but not a wise one," Sheikh



Poster, ripped by the author at night from a Cairo wall, exhorts the faithful: "Palestine Week: March 1-7, 1948! Every piastre you pay goes to fight in Palestine. . . . [Jewish] Gold can only be fought with gold. . . . Be generous and you will dominate and rule."

Mohammed said. "Visit me, and my men will teach you to kill."

"You will be afraid to go," the police lieutenant put in. "You will have fear of the Jews."

"I have no fears," I said. "I have faith, just as you have faith in Allah. With Allah at my side I have passed many dangers. Soon I shall leave with many volunteer fighters for the *Jehad* in Palestine. I shall stay until all Palestine is liberated from the Zionist Jews."

"Those are beautiful words," the sheikh said, after they had been translated loudly not only to him but to the entire grim audience about me.

"I fear but one thing," I went on, pressing my advantage, "to do evil against my fellow man—to steal, to lie, to cheat. These I will not do, for I believe them to be sinful in the sight of Allah, and an invitation for just retribution upon my head. To do good to my brother and expose the evil in man—those are my missions in life."

"Those are the very words of the Koran." The lieutenant looked at me entranced. My effusions were duly translated, to the grunting satisfaction of those present, as indicated by repeated murmurs of "*Allah! Allah!*" I had told the lieutenant I was a writer of books. He asked me what kind of books.

"Political books against the Jew," I said. This also he hastened to translate.

"I shall be honored to have a copy," he said. "I am a very deep Moslem. I believe very deeply in the Koran."

"I shall send you a copy of my next book," I said. "I will write of the virile qualities of the Arab, the justness of his cause, his manliness in battle." I did not hesitate to be lavish: this was no time or place to be subtle.

"*Hallet el-baraka. Hallet el-baraka!* the police lieutenant said over and over. "What a blessing from Allah. The blessing has truly descended!"

"*El-baraka alcikum,*" I responded, raising my eyes to heaven. "The blessing be on you." I was learning Arab ways.

I decided to leave on this pleasant note, lest I overplay my hand. As I stood up, half the room rose in respect to the American who looked, talked, and thought like an Arab. Solemnly I shook hands with my new-found friends, the lieutenant and the sheikh, and renewed my pledge to visit the latter in the desert. The lieutenant gave me his address and telephone number and vowed to get me out of any trouble I might find myself in.

As I kept visiting Ikhwan headquarters, it became increasingly difficult to enter the building inconspicuously, and my fear grew of detection by the Green Shirts, only a block away. I made it a point to keep away from Ahmed Hussein and the members (though I telephoned frequently) until I had finished my investigations of the Ikhwan.

My fame spread to such an extent that on succeeding days I was allowed to use my camera and to speak freely to anyone I wished at Ikhwan headquarters—privileges surely never before accorded to a non-Moslem. I walked in and out of the building, picking up items of information and piecing them together. I had not yet met the *Moorshid*. But I met other memorable characters. Among them was a thug who said gloatingly to me, pointing to a new automatic he had just bought: "This is for the Jew in battle. But this,"—pointing to a dagger—"is for the Jew in Cairo."

Another was Mahmoud Bey Labib, chief recruiting officer and trainer of Ikhwan volunteer fighters, who had lived in Germany for a while. Labib Bey was disappointed that I did not speak German fluently. He knew English, but had taken an oath not to speak it "until the last Englishman has left Egyptian soil," he told me through an interpreter. "I am against everything British, and that includes their cursed tongue. If I say one word in English by mistake, I must wash my mouth till every trace disappears."

Labib Bey was square-faced, surly, and apparently angry at the world as well as himself. He always appeared in a trench coat and carried leather gloves, after the fashion of the Nazi

bully-boys in Germany. "Everything in Germany was fine before they were defeated—and it took the whole world to defeat them. Everything the Nazis made was good, like that camera you have." He added: "Our boys believe that by fighting the Jew they will make a place for themselves in paradise. We will not leave Palestine until the last Zionist Jew is silenced."

Like the Green Shirts, the Moslem Brotherhood also had its volunteer fighters. Labib Bey told me there were at least twenty thousand. *Ikhwan el Muslimin*, the Brotherhood newspaper, described how one Palestine-bound contingent had fared:

Last Sunday was one of Allah's days in Port Said, for at one o'clock in the morning there arrived the Cairo train filled with people going to fight in the Holy War of Palestine. These faithful believers jumped on to the platform in Port Said, each carrying his own belongings, and marched in line to the Moslem Brothers' House as compact as the stones of a building. They were enthusiastically and energetically prepared to go on their way to the field of action and to fight for Allah. It was lovely to hear them singing: "Struggle is our way, and to die for Allah our highest ideal."

There was even a women's unit of the Ikhwan—a rare phenomenon in a country where women are relegated mainly to the kitchen and the fields. The *Moorshid* addressed them through a screen. Merchants were compelled to contribute to the Brotherhoods, often on the threat of reprisals, and there seemed to be no stratum of Cairo life that was not intimidated by them. I gained an inkling of the respect in which the Ikhwan was held one afternoon when my cab driver made a turn against traffic, and was roundly bawled out by a policeman. My driver broke into the rushing torrent of words long enough to utter a short sentence. The policeman shut up so quickly he almost bit his tongue. He made what appeared to

be an apology, saluted me respectfully, and cleared traffic for us. We sped on.

"What did you say to him?" I asked.

"I told him you were an important official I was taking to the Ikhwan."

Sheikh Hassan el Banna had powerful contacts in the government. He received support from the Arab League, from wealthy pashas and landowners who opposed Westernization because it would bring with it the end of child labor, the possible awakening of the *fellaheen*, and the possible revolt of workers who received wages as low as twenty cents a day. To workers El Banna preached the urgency of getting "back to the Koran," which, he pointed out carefully, made no provision for labor unions.

Several times a week hundreds of students from Fouad University and El Azhar would gather in the courtyard, and in study groups inside the building, to be harangued by the *Moorshid* himself, or by sheikhs sent specially by the Mufti. They preached the doctrine of the Koran in one hand and the sword in the other. It became clear to me why the average Egyptian worshipped the use of force. Terror was synonymous with power! This was one reason why most Egyptians, regardless of class or calling, had admired Nazi Germany. It helped explain the sensational growth of the Ikhwan el Muslimin. Beyond Egypt, El Banna envisaged the union of all Moslem countries into a gigantic Islamic power, with himself as caliph—both political and religious leader—of the Moslem world. The newspaper *Ikhwan el Muslimin* put it this way:

No justice will be dealt and no peace maintained on earth until the rule of the Koran and the bloc of Islam are established. Moslem unity must be established. Indonesia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Trans-Jordan, Palestine, Saudi-Arabia, Yemen, Egypt, Sudan, Tripoli, Tunis,

Algeria and Morocco all form one bloc, the Moslem bloc, which God has promised to grant victory, saying: "We shall grant victory unto the faithful." But this is impossible to reach other than through the way of Islam.

Those who charged that el Banna was also subsidized by the British Middle East Office in Cairo declared that it was British strategy to keep Egypt divided by political and religious strife: Egyptian anti-British feeling would then be lost in the growing domestic hubbub. At the same time, these domestic disturbances would justify keeping British troops in Egypt in order to prevent possible revolution.

The *Moorshid* maintained espionage squads everywhere. He also had a special assassin squad, entrusted with the duty of liquidating political opponents. El Banna resented a verdict that Judge Ahmed el Khazindar Bey meted out against a Moslem Brother, and ordered him liquidated. One of the *Moorshid's* henchmen took care of this assignment, aided by an assistant who pumped six bullets into the judge.

Under public pressure Cairo's police chief staged a few raids and made a few arrests. El Banna was annoyed. He ordered his terror squad to "teach the police chief a lesson." The latter was promptly killed by a hand grenade while on a tour of inspection of Fouad University. When the president of Fouad complained, he was denounced as a "European," publicly insulted, and narrowly missed being shot.

El Banna played for high stakes. Not content with liquidating a judge and a police chief, he ordered Abdel Maguid Ahmed Hassan, a twenty-three year old student and a member of his terror squad, to carry out his duty to Allah. A religious sheikh told Hassan that the Koran sanctioned the murder of the "enemies of Islam and of Arabism," whereupon Hassan dutifully swore to kill any traitor the *Moorshid* named. Hassan retired and spent his days in meditation, prayer, and preparation. On the tenth day after his oath he donned a policeman's uniform and went to the Ministry of Interior,

where he waited for the Egyptian prime minister, Mahmoud Fahmy el Nokrashy Pasha, to emerge. As soon as Nokrashy Pasha appeared, followed by his bodyguard, Abdel whipped out a pistol and shot the minister dead, his duty to the *Moorshid* and to Allah fulfilled, his place in heaven assured.

## I MEET THE MOORSHID

ALL that I had learned about Hassan el Banna and the unquestioned loyalty he inspired in his cutthroats only whetted my desire to meet him. It proved more difficult than I expected, because of his deep hatred of "Europeans." Finally one day, accompanied by my friend Gamal, I walked into Ikhwan headquarters for my audience with the Supreme Guide.

He approached us—a short, squat ratty-faced man with puffed cheeks and fleshy nose. He was dressed in European clothes—a black pinpoint double-breasted suit—and wore an extra tall tarboosh, which gave him the illusion of added height. His thin beard, running from ear to ear, crawled up, then down his upper lip like an ugly black hirsute vine. His manner was mousy and furtive. His eyes, beadlike and deep-set, were like two dark slits across his face. We sat in the shade, under the shield showing the Koran above a pair of crossed swords.

The *Moorshid* spoke with a pious look on his face, his head bent slightly to the right, hands folded meekly in his lap. I disliked him instantly and thoroughly. He was the most loathsome man I had yet met in Cairo. Gamal sat next to us and faithfully interpreted.

"The Koran should be Egypt's constitution, for there is no law higher than Koranic law," the *Moorshid* began. "We seek to fulfill the lofty, human message of Islam which has brought happiness and fulfillment to mankind in centuries past. Ours is the highest ideal, the holiest cause and the purest way.

Those who criticize us have fed from the tables of Europe. They want to live as Europe has taught them—to dance, to drink, to revel, to mix the sexes openly and in public.”

I asked his views on establishing the Caliphate, the complete merger of Church and State—the Moslem equivalent of religious totalitarianism, as in Spain.

“We want an Arabian United States with a Caliphate at its head and every Arab state subscribing wholeheartedly to the laws of the Koran. We must return to the Koran, which preaches the good life, which forbids us to take bribes, to cheat, to kill one’s brother. The laws of the Koran are suitable for all men at all times to the end of the world. This is the day and this is the time when the world needs Islam most.”

I could not help making a mental note that the word “Christian” has been similarly used and with similar fanaticism among Western exponents of authoritarianism.

“We are not eager to have a parliament of the representatives of the people,” the Supreme Guide continued, “or a cabinet of ministers, unless such representatives and ministers are Koranic Moslems. If we do not find them, then we must ourselves serve as the parliament. Allah and the religious councils will limit our authority so that no one has to fear dictatorship. We aim to smash modernism in government and society. In Palestine our first duty as Moslems is to crush Zionism, which is Jewish modernism. It is our patriotic duty. The Koran commands it.”

He was silent, and then nodded, to indicate the interview was over. And with this Gamal and I took leave of Ikhwan’s *Moorshid* and Egypt’s Rasputin.

“What do you think of our *Moorshid*?” Gamal asked.

“He is a holy man,” I said.

“It is good that you have met him yourself. Now you can write the truth.” He paused. “You must also visit Fouad University with me. We are very strong there. You will find it very interesting. But we must be careful. They do not like journalists. . . .”

## (CHAPTER V)

### BEHIND THE CORRESPONDENT’S CURTAIN



*“In what other country do you find eighty-five per cent of the people illiterate? . . . Education means social revolution. They don’t want us to think, to speak out, or ask questions.”*

Students of Fouad University, Cairo

AT TEN o’clock the next morning I met Gamal at the trolley-stop in front of Fouad, Egypt’s leading university. Together we walked toward the entrance. Here stood, side by side, a solid phalanx of soldiers of the Royal Egyptian Army, each armed with rifle, cartridge belt, metal helmet, and three-foot long bamboo staves filled with lead. Behind them were arrayed another row of soldiers, armed and carrying extra-long (I judged them to be about ten feet) black rawhide whips tapering to wired points. There was also an assortment of police in the usual black uniforms, and a number of political police and plainclothesmen. Every student had to show his credentials to the commanding officer, then successively had to run the gauntlet of checkpoints to the classrooms.

I began to understand what Gamal meant when he said: “We must be careful.” The guards looked at my papers and shook their heads. For clearance we had to go to the Agouza Police Station, located conveniently near by. A few paces

away a company of soldiers were resting, their leather whips coiled like black snakes around their feet. Some were chewing on sugarcane stalks and listening to an officer reading a newspaper.

"The soldiers are illiterate," Gamal whispered. "Only the officers read."

In the courtyard of the police station were scores of reinforcements, idling. They had guns, black shields, and the ever present rawhide whips. We made our way, shunted from one room to another, questioned by one police officer after another, until we reached the major police factotum, at the moment busy brushing off a fly that was buzzing stickily around his head.

He went through my pedigree with the thoroughness of the FBI. Why did I want to visit the university? Because I was an American university graduate, I was leaving tomorrow (this of course was not true), and wanted to visit the distinguished Arabic institution of higher learning whose fame had reached America. Surely I would not be denied this honor. He made two telephone calls, after which he gave us a slip of paper. This permit in hand, we walked toward a back entrance, lined mostly with plainclothesmen and a few police. The commanding officer called over the biggest man I had laid eyes upon in Cairo, an extraordinarily powerful guard at least seven feet tall. This Egyptian Goliath carried a pistol and a short whip. With Gamal and me trailing, he led us across the beautiful palm-strewn campus, past huddled groups of students and watchful detectives, and finally delivered us to the mercies of a gang of political police, bristling with revolvers, whips, and handcuffs. After a brief interrogation we were finally allowed to enter one of the classroom buildings. I looked at my watch. It was 11.35 a.m. The ordeal had required an hour and thirty-five minutes.

I sat in on a class on civil law. There were about thirty students, some wearing fezzes, and all listening to the lecture with deep absorption. In the front rows were eight dark-eyed

girls. One of them, short and plump, with gold earrings dangling from pierced lobes, read a paper on "Debts of a Dead Man." Class was over at noon.

"Would you like to meet any of the professors?" Gamal asked me. I said no. I wanted to give the police no reason to report that an American was agitating among them. Gamal left me for a while to seek a friend, and I found myself surrounded by some of the students—all male—who spoke English. I told them at the outset that I would not answer questions. I was a "guest of your government," and it would not be proper for me to make any comments.

"It's not a government, it's a dictatorship," one of the boys shot back. If I wanted proof, he said, in the 1945 elections, the Saadist Party, then in power, had so terrorized the opposition, the Wafdist Party—which stood for a progressive type of Egyptian nationalism—that the latter had refused to participate. The Saadists had been easily re-elected. "The election was a joke. The police had orders to beat anyone suspected of wanting to vote against the regime. You can get anybody killed or elected here," he said bitterly. "All you need is to have money and to know the right officials."

This seemed bold talk to me, but I found the students with whom I spoke, unlike the generally lethargic populace, to be alert and socially conscious. They were ashamed of the backwardness of their country, resentful at continued British occupation and intrigues, hateful of wealthy landowners who perpetuated the feudal system, and they were constantly demanding drastic social reforms.

"We've just had another cholera epidemic," one of them said angrily. "More than ten thousand died. Some of your American serum saved the rest, for which we thank you. They gave a banquet for the minister of health because so few had died. That *jahsh*—donkey—said that he still doesn't know how the epidemic began. We can tell him. It began in our own filthy cities."

"We want you to know the truth." This speaker was a well-



built young man with burning eyes. "The effendis want to hide it from you. We want American advice. We want Marshall Plan help, and we want you to help administer it so the people will benefit. The effendis do not want this because they want to keep the money for themselves. This class is not worthy of Egypt. It is not worthy of your friendship. You in America, turn your eyes to our people. Our people are your only friends."

"When you go back, tell this to America." Another student suddenly spoke up. He quoted from a clipping from a Cairo weekly, *Roz-el Yusef*: "'Mohammed Barazi Ibrahim, chief physician of Fouad University, has reported that only 7.5 per cent of his students enjoy full health.' And listen to this: '92.5 per cent are afflicted with some kind of sickness; 50 per cent have chest diseases including tuberculosis; 87 per cent suffer from malnutrition; 84 per cent have anemia.' These are college students, remember. The common people are much worse off."

The first student said: "Did you ever hear of bilharziasis?"

The word seemed familiar. Somewhere I had read of a grotesque disease, carried by snails, which some of our American soldiers had contacted during the war by swimming in the Nile.

"That's right," he said, "Do you know that ninety per cent of our *fellaheen* suffer from it most of their lives? It's a liver fluke that gets into their systems. They begin passing blood and they get used to passing blood all their days. It makes them tired, apathetic, unambitious, and always feeling below par. That's the curse of Egypt. Disease. Tuberculosis. Hookworm. Trachoma. Malaria. Filth that breeds disease. Poverty that leads to filth. And social backwardness by our leaders who are blind to anything but their own pleasures."

He spoke with such vehemence that a plainclothesman who had been standing at the door of the classroom, eyeing me, sauntered over and growled a question.

"He wants to know why we are talking to you," one youth

translated, "He doesn't think it is proper because you are a foreigner."

"I am only listening. You are talking to me," I said.

The student who had cited the health statistics tugged at my arm. "In what other country do you find eighty-five per cent of the people illiterate? People are begging to go to school, but there are no schools. There is only money for the secret police and the pleasures of the pashas and officials."

"Education means social revolution," another put in. "They don't want us to think, to speak out, or ask questions."

"Look at the army they've put in here to silence us. They are more afraid of us than of the people," a third said.

During the discussion I had noticed a young man standing by, listening intently but saying nothing. Just as Gamal returned, the stranger approached me and, speaking excellent English, asked: "What is your name, please, and where are you staying?"

If he was an informer, and I refused to reply, I was sure he would have me followed. On the other hand, by being frank I might disarm him. So I gave him my name, and my room number at the Continental.

"I shall visit you at four o'clock today," he said mysteriously.

"I shall wait for you," I said.

As we left, Gamal whispered, "All those boys are Communists. They are modernists. They have been contaminated by European ideas and corrupted by the West. They are as bad as the Jews. We have had many fights with them."

I felt I had to make my position clear to Gamal. "I was waiting for you when they began to talk to me. I said nothing to them."

Gamal nodded. "It is all right," he said. "But never forget—you must be careful all the time."

We retraced our circuitous way back through the police cordons, reporting at various checkpoints until we finally

emerged from the grounds. I estimated that there were at least five hundred soldiers and assorted police on duty. "Yes," said Gamal, "we also have Ikhwan members here. They watch not only the students, but also some of the professors. They are just as Communist as the students."

### THE SLUMS OF CAIRO

THE mysterious student, whom I shall call Yusef, was in the lobby of the Continental at exactly four o'clock. He lit the cigarette I offered him and looked at me.

"How did you like our university with all those police?" he asked.

I smiled noncommittally. "I hear you are a Communist."

"In Egypt every reformer is called a Communist," he replied. He was a clean-cut, attractive young man of about twenty-three, with brilliant black eyes, curly hair, and a great earnestness about him. He had been jailed twelve times because he believed passionately in social reform. "Because I think this, I am called a Communist," he said.

He explained that he believed in neither violence nor armed revolution. He was a supporter of Ghandi's methods of "passive resistance" and "demonstration." He told me the Egyptian government had sent soldiers to the university in February 1946, after more than twenty-five thousand students and workers had staged a giant demonstration against the Saadist regime. Seven had been killed and scores wounded in the rioting. Numerous professors had been dismissed or transferred since then.

Yusef explained that he represented the "radical young generation" that sought to divorce itself from Egyptian ultra-conservatism and particularly from the straitjacket of Moslem orthodoxy. He rarely attended religious services. "Worship is something between God and myself. It is not necessary to

make public parades of religion." He was opposed to Zionism: "It is not fair to divide in two a country which was held so long by the Arabs. It is the British who caused the trouble by making promises to both sides." He believed that Arab women should be emancipated, and the veil done away with: "Why should not my mother be treated as the equal of my father?"

This in itself was heretical to a devout Moslem, who considers woman his inferior. As Yusef pointed out, the native woman walks behind her husband, works for him, offers no protests when beaten, and must be at his disposal at all times. The ideal wife was one who bore male children and served as an uncomplaining maid, mistress, and scapegoat. Husband-and-wife relationship in the Western sense was largely unknown. Romantic courtship and marriage for love were rare. Equality of the sexes was regarded as "European" and therefore corruptive of the male. It was difficult for a woman to get a divorce. But a man could obtain one simply by proclaiming three times: "*Aleiky el-talaq*. On you be the divorce." Regardless of length of servitude, or illness, or financial status, she must leave his bed and board—usually leaving behind all the male children, sometimes taking a few of the girls—and return to her family. Remarriage was almost impossible, for the average Moslem would not take a wife worn out from work. The Koran decrees that a Moslem may have four wives at one time, as long as he can support them. Most Moslems today, however, practice monogamy. Bedouin Sheikh Salman el Huzeil married twenty-six wives before he died, underbidding one of his antecedents who had changed wives twenty-eight times.

"Before I am jailed again—this time for talking with a foreign journalist," Yusef said after a while, "I would like to show you a bit of the real Egypt—something that most journalists never see. Will you come with me? The place is not far from here."

I agreed. Walking, we saw many sights common to Cairo. In the first instance it was a barefooted girl perhaps ten years

old, dressed in rags. Her individual toes were invisible because of grime that had caked all over her—it had even worked its way into her matted hair. Her face haunted me. There were black blotches on it—and only as she came nearer did I realize that these were masses of flies feeding on festering open sores. She was holding aloft what seemed to be a doll. Then we saw that the doll was actually an infant—perhaps one or two years old, probably alive, although we could not see it breathing, or hear it cry as babies do when roughly handled. The tiny infant was in tatters, one mass of filth from head to toe. Its closed lids were slits of raw, inflamed skin, the usual result of trachoma. The girl was now squealing in a shrill voice, hopping from one pedestrian to another, begging.

“Is the baby dead or alive?” I asked Yusef.

He shrugged his shoulders. “Only Allah knows. If it is not dead, it will die before long. The garbage wagons pick up many of them every morning. The parents have so many children, and are so poor they cannot bury them. . . . Wait!”

Yusef walked over, gave the girl a few coins. She pinched the waif’s arm. It let out a thin wavering wail that sickened me.

“The girl says it is her sister, and she was born ill.” Yusef saw the expression on my face. “Wait, you will see worse things in a minute.”

A street urchin, carrying a shoe-shine box, accosted me—the obvious foreigner. “*Imshi!*” I said. “Beat it!” The boy kept backing up before me, pointing at my shoes insistently.

“If you don’t tip him he will throw liquid polish on you,” Yusef warned. “I shall hit him. It is the only language he understands.”

“Don’t,” I said. “I won’t be bullied, and you won’t hit him.”

The urchin edged up to me, his brush dripping polish, poised to be hurled. As I looked at him coldly, his face changed to that of an angered animal. His throat apparently worked with most foreigners. He was now both furious and frustrated, his teeth bared like those of a dog about to strike.

Suddenly I let out a series of oaths in Turkish, Armenian, English, and a few I had learned in Arabic, that would have reddened a mummy’s face. The first salvo apparently terrorized the little bully; the encore sent him scurrying.

“You have learned Arab ways very quickly,” Yusef said admiringly.

Except for the boulevards, tourist spots, and wealthy residential areas, Cairo is foul and smelly, one of the most unsanitary cities in the world. Dates are sold on the streets, black flies swarming on them by the hundreds. I saw native barley bread displayed on a tray on the sidewalk, making it easier for dust, flies, and finely ground horse-dung to settle on it. The Egyptian fly enjoys a reputation unique among the pests of the world. An especially hardy breed, its ancestry probably dating to the time of the Pharaohs, it is almost impossible to destroy. It is the best-fed (and least molested) fly in the world, thriving on huge piles of rubbish in streets, alleys, and on roofs of native dwellings where the refuse of generations collects.

With Yusef I saw a family of four children and their parents squatting near the gutter, eating a meal of bread and *fasoulia*, cooked marrow-beans. The bread rolled to the gutter. *Ma’alesh*, never mind. One of the children picked it up. A little further on, we saw an old woman in a black dress selling oranges the size of lemons which she displayed on a rag at the gutter’s edge. Within arm’s reach was a steaming manure pile. Huddled against the doorway we saw a woman holding a filthy infant in her arms, examining his head with near-sighted diseased eyes. She paused for a moment, coughed, then leaned over and spat. With her fingers, she scooped the dirt on the sidewalk to cover her sputum, then went back to her lice-picking. I noticed tiny mounds of concealed sputum around her. Heaven only knows whether she was tubercular, syphilitic, or what.

A beggar stopped at the fruit stand, pleading for rotted, fly-specked dates. He was chased away with a whip, accompanied

by oaths. He was on crutches, a rag over his head, dressed in a patchwork of rags. I caught a glimpse of his face. It was horribly pockmarked, and his right eye was a molten grayish ball ringed with a perimeter of reddish sores. I turned my head.

"Have you thought where that beggar or his family might live?" Yusef asked. "You will now see. We are almost there."

We arrived at a section in the heart of Cairo known as Aishash el Tourgoman, a typical Egyptian slum. We entered a world so completely different from anything I have seen in twenty-three years as a reporter that I was numbed by the shock. What has horrified you most? Was it the sight of a mutilated body, frozen in the grimace of tortured death? Can you describe it? Could you bear to look again? If one agonized death shocked you, what effect would a dozen, a score, a hundred such have upon you?

At Aishash el Tourgoman thousands of agonized men, women, and children stared at me in living death. Their hovels were built of earth, or of rotted wood creaking on tottering foundations. They were dark caves, and the earthen floor was lined with dried dung. People slept here, with no blanket under or over them. The odor of death and disease was everywhere. The "streets"—alleyways from five to ten feet wide—twisted around in a maze so complex that once inside a stranger might never find his way out. There were no windowpanes, no curtains, no doors, and no electricity. Children huddled about their mothers, too sick or too feeble to play. Scrawny chickens, dogs, cats moved in and out of hovels, feeding and dropping around the family. On a dungheap with a donkey standing as immobile as death itself, dwarfed and diseased children moved about. Huge dead rats, as large as cats—bloody and mangled in death, their huge tails curling around them like the whips of Egyptian police—lay tossed and decaying on garbage heaps. Healthy green-black flies, mosquitoes, and other insects filled the air, clung to your skin like glue, or buzzed away in giant swarms carrying the diseases of death. For generations these men and women of Cairo had

lived this life—each generation adding its contribution of filth to the common store.

If you go to Cairo, remember Aishash el Tourgoman! A guide won't take you. Officials will shunt you away. They will tell you I am lying. Get a friend like Yusef, one who loves his country to the extent of risking jail time and again in the hope of banishing the Aishash el Tourgomans from the face of Egypt.

These slums beyond slums are not found in the big cities alone. Egypt has hundreds of living graveyards to compare with Aishash el Tourgoman. The thousands of men, women, and children living in this particular district are but a segment of the millions who live like them throughout Egypt. No Egyptian will deny this to his fellow Egyptian.<sup>1</sup> But he will deny it to a foreigner, so deep is his guilt in knowing that Aishash el Tourgoman is far more typical of Egypt than are the boulevards, hotels, shops, and residential areas that tourists frequent. The bar of Shepherd's, the tea tables at Groppis (a kind of Egyptian Schrafft's), the lounge of the Semiramis, and the elaborate hotels at Luxor are *not* Egypt!

Yusef looked at me speculatively.

"I know another place," he said. "It is worse than this."

"Thank you," I said. "But I've had enough for one day."

We parted company and I took the trolley back to the Continental. I asked the Sudanese steward to prepare a hot tub bath for me. I soaked and soaped myself thoroughly, gave myself a scalding hairwash, and made a complete change of clothing. For days thereafter I thought that every itch and every sign of fatigue was a souvenir acquired in Aishash el Tourgoman.

<sup>1</sup> An exceptionally frank book, candidly revealing the social conditions of the Egyptian masses, is *The Fellaheen*, by Father Henry Habib-Ayrout, S.J., published by R. Schindler, Cairo.

## I CLIMB A PYRAMID

FOR the time being I had had enough of the seamy side of Cairo. Deciding to see other facets of the city which might give me better perspective, I visited the famous mosques and the imposing Citadel. I made a tour of the bazaar area. With the Armenian I had met at the airport I went to several night-clubs. I attended a formal spring ball at Heliopolis, a suburb of Cairo, and found the gowns lovely, but the girls less pretty than ours.

In the Garden City section I marveled at the homes, gardens, and the exceptionally handsome modern architecture. I wondered how it was possible for the architects of Egypt to live in the twentieth century, while the vast majority of its society wallowed in feudalism. Invited by someone from the Arab League Office, I had tea at the Gezira Sporting Club, a smart gathering-place for the international set, patronized mainly by the wealthy, by members of the foreign ministries, Europeanized Arabs, and expensive kept women with faces like worn doormats. At the Gezira I was urged not to miss the royal museum. But I knew of the glory that was Egypt. I was living in modern Egypt—an entirely different world. I was in the Middle East to study life, not historical deadwood.

I picked a bright sunny day when I had no appointments scheduled. I boarded a trolley that took me to the Mena House, the finest hotel in Cairo, and stepping-off point for visits to the Pyramids. I weathered a locust swarm of guides, pimps, camel-ride vendors, photographers, shoe-shine boys and dragoman-leeches who hurled themselves on me the moment I dismounted, and finally chose a young and sturdy Egyptian named Khalil. According to the card he thrust in my face, he was also "contractor" (whatever that meant) for "Cameles and Horsese."

With him I visited the interior of one of the Pyramids: the

stony cavern with its age-long layer of dust and grime was neither attractive nor inspiring to me. I paid my respects to the Sphinx, took a ride on a camel, and late in the afternoon decided to climb the Pyramid of Cheops. At best this is a hazardous venture, since the rocks of which the Pyramid is built—piled one upon the other—are huge, and no clear path to the top is visible. Few can climb safely without the help of an expert guide. One literally signs away his life to his guide. I bargained with Khalil as to his fee. He asked for four dollars. Since the customary price was one third of that, we settled for three dollars—equivalent to the weekly wage of the average Egyptian worker—payable on the completion of the journey.

With Khalil leading the way, we scrambled up from one rock to another. The Pyramid's peak is nearly 500 feet from the desert floor. As we paused halfway up, I stole a glance backward. I was almost terrified at the trail of jagged rock we had come up. At this point there was no railing, no rope, nothing to cling to if one became dizzy. One false step—a slip—and death waited on the sandstone far below.

"Let's climb," I said to Khalil. "Standing still makes me nervous."

"Ahh, the Amrikani is making afraid, yes?"

"Let's go, Khalil. *Yallah*, Khalil!"

The ascent seemed to grow steeper. My heart began to pound from the exertion. Common sense dictated that we pause once more. I avoided looking down again: I was afraid of the tricks my imagination might play. We finally reached the top. I found it a flat square of stone about twenty feet on each side. I would have liked to have my name carved on the rock—traditional with tourists who reach the top—but the Arab who usually carried out that task had put away his tools, his brazier, and charcoal, and was about to leave.

"I am sorry I cannot even serve you tea," he said. "It is very late."

He left. Khalil and I found ourselves alone on the top of the Pharaoh's five-thousand-year-old tomb. Cheops had em-

ployed a hundred thousand *fellahcen* in relays for three months to build this monument to his name. As the story was told me, he even set Hentsen, his daughter, to work—selling her honor to help pay the expenses. For sentiment's sake, Hentsen's lovers built her a small pyramid next to that of her father. With Khalil, I watched the glorious desert sunset, a horizon aflame with gold. Below, to our left, was the Mena House. Before us was the palace where King Farouk reportedly held notorious wild parties. To our right were the ancient ruins of Pharaonic tombs. In the distance, the Sphinx looked on impassively, its nose blunted by Napoleon's cannon. The panorama of Cairo spread before me. The desert stretched to the horizon, broken only by an occasional house or clump of palms. It was truly a majestic and breathtaking sight, well worth the trouble to reach the top.

But what next? The descent worried me! Even though Mother says I was raised on goat's milk, alas, the goat's skill at mountain-climbing had never been transmitted! The sun had just touched the rim of the horizon and a chill, shifting, moody wind, laden with fine sand, swept in from the desert, eerie in the sudden, silent way it had sprung up. I took it as an omen.

"Yallah, Khalil," I said. "Let's go. It's getting dark fast!"

"I want you pay me three dollars now," Khalil said, seated comfortably crosslegged before me.

"That was not our bargain. I pay you when we get down," I said firmly.

"I want money now," Khalil said, refusing to budge.

"You go to hell, my Arab friend!"

This caught Khalil by surprise. I had not the slightest idea how I'd climb down by myself, but I went boldly to the side up which we had come and took the first step.

"Pay me now half," Khalil suggested, from his sitting position.

"I give you now American cigarettes. I pay you all when we

down," I countered. I left a few cigarettes on the rock, and began my perilous descent.

"Wait!" Khalil called out. "I come."

I assumed an air of impatience.

Khalil brushed past me in his skirts, and led the way down. I expected the worst from him now, and I was doubly wary. First, I waited to make sure we were going the same way we came up, lest he maneuver me to an inaccessible part of the Pyramid and strand me there for the night. If that was his plan, he had chosen the proper moment. All the guides had disappeared. There was no soul in sight. We were enveloped in heavy silence. Not even a dog barked. Khalil and I were utterly alone in the vastness of desert, perched atop Cheops, with God as the only witness. Tiny human specks clinging to this gigantic masonry, we were invisible even from Mena House, the closest habitation, almost a mile away. Under these circumstances, I was also wary of a possible "accident." A slight push might easily send me crashing down, with no witnesses except Khalil to testify that it was my fault—and no witnesses to watch while he picked my corpse later for whatever of value I had on me.

As we worked our way down, every few minutes I would pause and yell: "This way is not right, Khalil. You are taking me down wrong. This other way is right."

We would argue back and forth on the rock, closer to heaven than earth, and I would finally follow him. Halfway down, Khalil waited till I had caught up.

"I want three dollars now," he announced.

I sat down in a corner formed by two giant rocks, and waved him on:

"Go ahead alone. I stay here. When I come down I pay you."

Khalil looked at me: "You speak Amerikan, but you are not Amerikan, yes?"

I knew what he meant. "Yes and no, Khalil," I said. "I was

born in America. My mother is a Moslem from Baghdad named Maryam. My father is Armenian. I am not American. I am *Armani*. Understand?" It was as bizarre a lie as I could think up at the moment, but its effect was magical.

"Allah! Allah! You half Muslimin, half Armani. I now everything understand. Why you not say before?"

My alleged ancestry put an end to our East-West misunderstanding. He could no longer bully an "Armenian" born of a "Moslem mother," so he began to skip down the rocks, taking what appeared to be a short cut. Forgetting myself, I began to skip gayly after him, never daring to look anywhere but the next rock. Down, down, down we skipped, until finally we reached the desert floor.

"Thank God," I said, and sat down exhausted, a physical and nervous wreck. I paid off Khalil, gave him the pack of cigarettes as *baksheesh*. "Allah ma'ak," I said, parting friends. "God be with you."

"Allah yittawil omrak," he said. "May God lengthen your days."

As I sat at the foot of Cheops, panting, I could not help but believe that God had intervened. I thanked Him again, with a silent prayer. After a few minutes rest, I hobbled back to the Mena House for a sumptuous dinner. It marked the end of my adventure as a tourist—an ordeal I had found more dangerous than investigation.

The next morning, at six as usual, I was awakened by Cairo's loudest and most disrespectful donkey. I heaped on his invisible head curses in six languages. May he be visited by a gnawing pestilence and his bones rot. In the hereafter, may he never find a moment's rest, but have crushing loads to carry, and a cruel master to whip him on the hour. All these I wished upon him and more.

## (CHAPTER VI)

### WORLD OF THE KORAN: ISLAM ÜBER ALLES



*"We will fight with the devil next time, if necessary.  
We will fight with Russia against both England  
and the United States to achieve our independence.  
We will be Communists. We will be anything. . . .  
We will act as Egyptians."*

Saleh Harb Pasha  
Former Egyptian Minister of Defense

I WAS visiting the headquarters of the Arab League, trying to learn the latest news from Palestine, when one of the officials called me aside and said:

"You have become quite a familiar figure around the Arab League, haven't you? You fly in and out like a bird. You always carry a camera and get around a great deal for a man who is in Egypt for just a short visit."

How he knew that I had put down "short visit" on my Egyptian visa application in London, or that I got around, I never knew. But I determined to be careful, especially when one of his wealthy friends invited me to a party at his desert ranch near the Pyramids. One of the princesses of the royal family (all were beautiful) had been invited. Such an event, under the dancing stars and alluring Egyptian moon, with dark-eyed houris and exotic Oriental music, could add a glit-

tering page of Arabian Nights adventure to my experiences. But I had a girl back home; and the multiple dangers implicit in such an arrangement made me cautious, especially when I learned that some of the guests were to be British and Arab agents. All would be curious about the "American who is seeing everybody."

Instead, I concentrated on Saleh Harb Pasha, former minister of defense, and now director of Shuban el Muslimin, the Young Moslem Association.<sup>1</sup> He was an intimate of Hassan el Banna. Although the Shuban was not officially sending volunteers to fight the Jews, it was a center of agitation frequented by Green Shirt, Ikhwan, and Mufti henchmen. While minister of defense during the war, Harb Pasha had been removed from office, arrested and interned.

Harb Pasha said to me in English: "If Rommel had won we would be independent now. If the Nazis and Fascists had won [those were his words, not "Germany and Italy"] they would have been friends to the whole Arab world. And," he mused, "there would have been no Zionist problem because there would have been no Zionist Jews . . . or any Jews at all left."

He was a large, brusque man—strong-tempered, volatile, with protruding eyes and rocklike jaw of a boxer. He had served in the Turkish army in World War I against the Allies and later joined the Egyptian army.

"The English are making a cat's-paw out of you Americans," he went on. "We say in Egypt that the Americans are first in science and industry, but children in diplomacy. The French say: *Cherchez la femme*. I say to you that whenever there is intrigue in the Arab world, search for the English hand. For sixty-six years we have been her slave. We hate Communism because we are Moslems, but a counsel of despair will carry the day when Britain asks for our help next

<sup>1</sup>It claimed 20,000 members in Cairo, 300 branches in Egypt, and 250,000 members throughout the world. My references are to the Egyptian organization only, and have no bearing on any group with the same or similar name outside Cairo.

time. We look on democracy as a myth because imperialism is still with us. We will fight with the devil next time, if necessary. We will fight with Russia against both England and the United States to achieve our independence. We will be Communists. We will be anything. But we will be independent. We will act as Egyptians."

I found this feeling—its genuineness will only be determined in a crisis—widespread throughout the Arab world.

### SPIES, COURIERS, AND TRAITORS

THERE is no doubt in my mind that this hatred for British imperialism had much to do with the pro-Axis sympathies of most of the Egyptian royal court. Those sympathies were known to Allied intelligence early in World War II. Later they became a world scandal. Members of Egypt's first family were involved in espionage for Italy. In some of King Farouk's palaces Italian technicians operated radios and relayed intelligence to Rome. Many of the king's mistresses were Axis agents. His palace was a rendezvous for spies, couriers, and traitors. During the Nuremberg trials, it was brought out that one of Farouk's cousins, Prince Mansour Daud, was provided with an apartment and personal expenses by the German Foreign Office (see Chapter XXII). He was reported to have broadcast Axis propaganda in Arabic.

The sensational record of correspondence between Farouk and Hitler was revealed in Nazi documents discovered after the war, and disclosed in a memorandum submitted to the United Nations during 1948 by the Nation Associates of New York. It showed how Farouk took the initiative in writing to Hitler. On April 30, 1941, Hitler replied to Farouk's note of April 15, and stated that he would "gladly consider a closer co-operation." Hitler asked Farouk to delegate "an au-



thorized confidential agent to a third place, like Bucharest or Ankara, in order to discuss this co-operation." It was agreed that the Mufti should act as an intermediary.

Outside the palace the orgy of Nazi collaboration was at fever pitch. British plans for the defense of strategic Tobruk, less than one hundred miles from the Egyptian frontier, which had unwisely been communicated to the Egyptian high command, were promptly relayed to Nazi intelligence. Tobruk fell, a "Rommel victory" traceable to the Egyptian fifth column. The Egyptian parliament and press repeated verbatim the Nazi propaganda broadcasts by the Mufti and his agents from Berlin, Rome, Bari, and Athens. German victories were headlined in the Egyptian newspapers: "You could tell if the Germans or the Allies were winning merely by looking into the faces of the Egyptians," a journalist said to me.

So pronounced was pro-Axis sentiment throughout the Arab world that this phrase became common: "*Bissama Allah, ala' alard Hitler*. In heaven Allah, on earth Hitler."

The spring of 1942 found the Allied cause in North Africa nearly doomed, with Rommel only seventy-five miles from Alexandria, Egypt's second city. The island of Crete, just north of Egypt, was already in Nazi hands. The presence of British troops and brilliant counterespionage kept Egyptians from committing violent acts of sabotage and spreading the welcome rug for Rommel. If Egypt fell, one by one the other Arab countries (except Trans-Jordan, a virtual British colony) would have soon surrendered. Oil from the Middle East would have greased the Nazi war machine. The Suez Canal would have served the Nazi cause. The resources of the Empire would have been cut in two, and Allied Forces pinched between Africa and a hostile Arab world.

The British took drastic action. They forced King Farouk to remove Ali Maher Pasha and appoint their choice, Moustafa el Nahas Pasha, as prime minister. The Axis agents in the king's entourage were cleaned out and about 350 important officials and members of the royal family were imprisoned or kept un-

der house arrest in villas far removed from Cairo. With the same broom Prime Minister Ali Maher and his Minister of Defense, Salch Harb Pasha, were swept into internment. The Chief of Staff, Aziz Ali Masri Pasha, was already in custody, forced down by the RAF at Almaza Airport with his two aides as they were about to flee in an Egyptian military plane. A *New York Times* dispatch reported: "It was believed he might try to slip across into Libya, there perhaps to give the Germans the benefit of his knowledge of desert warfare. . . . General Masri Pasha is known to and admired by the Germans."

To be fair, it must be mentioned that a few Egyptian statesmen consistently urged a declaration of war against the Axis. One of these had been Ahmed Maher Pasha, a distinguished member of the Egyptian parliament. Three months before V-E Day, Egypt finally declared war against the Axis, in order to assure herself a seat at the United Nations. Syria and Lebanon followed. Ahmed Maher Pasha was on his way to make the announcement in the senate when he was shot dead. The assassin was a former member of the Green Shirts who, like his king, believed that Hitler could win the war.

#### THE NON-EGYPTIAN KING OF EGYPT

KING FAROUK, the pleasure-loving monarch who has made more headlines than any Egyptian ruler since Cleopatra, lives and reigns like a Turkish sultan. An alien by blood—the founder of the dynasty was Mohammed Ali, a tobacco merchant of mixed ancestry from Albania—Farouk has as much feeling for his people as had the Turkish sultans when they reigned over Egypt.

Farouk rules by paternal terror and heavy bribes. He can dismiss a government at will. Though he is cordially hated by many Egyptians, he is fawned upon in public. Foreign correspondents, to say nothing of local journalists, are prohibited

by law from attacking, criticizing, or referring to the king and the royal family unless they submit their writing to a censor first.

There is good reason for this law. Farouk's private life has become a public scandal. For nearly a decade, while he was married to the beautiful Queen Farida—meaning "the Only One"—he committed adultery with women he picked up publicly. Next to politics the king's promiscuous private life is the most discussed public matter in Cairo. It is common knowledge that he attends Cairo and Alexandria night-clubs for "pick-ups" to feed an insatiable lust. From many Egyptian eyewitnesses I have ascertained that frequently when he sees an attractive woman he nods toward her. The royal pimps immediately get busy. They accost her, bowing, and tell the lady it is the king's wish to "dance" with her. Since the king rarely dances in public (he is too fat to look courtly), the happy event usually takes place in the king's private quarters in convenient sections of Cairo. His willing and unwilling dance partners, so reports go, have included Italian belles, English society women, and during the war, our own WAC's.

Any number of things can happen when the escort refuses to surrender his girl to Farouk. If he is an Egyptian, he knows better than to frustrate the monarch. I have the testimony of a friend who swore that he was present at the Auberge des Pyramides, a night-club on the outskirts of Cairo, when a non-Egyptian girl refused to "dance." Upon the king's orders the lights were dimmed, the night-club declared closed, and the girl and her escort ordered to get out. In another authenticated instance, freely discussed in American circles, the king was attracted to a lady escorted by a U. S. Army Major. The major told Farouk's pimp "to go to hell." The king, fuming, could do nothing without causing an international incident. And he did nothing.

Mussolini and his agents used to debauch Farouk with many a skilled Italian Jezebel, thereby helping make more secure the Axis's position in the Middle East. It is common

talk in Egypt that in 1943 (five years after his marriage) the king was driving furiously with two Italian girls and a male companion when his car hit a truck near the village of Kasassein. He spent a month at a British military hospital. It was reported he broke two ribs and sustained serious eye injuries.

Farouk is fabulously wealthy. His father, Fouad, left him a fortune estimated at forty million dollars. Farouk and the royal family own about one million acres out of the five and a half million under cultivation in Egypt. He possesses huge villas and palaces throughout Egypt, and several private planes for emergency departure. In addition, he receives an annual income of half a million dollars from the government. His investments, scattered in Switzerland and other countries, reputedly total sixty million dollars. He operates a model farm and owns a number of night clubs and restaurants in Cairo and Alexandria.

The king lives in constant fear of his life. I saw him one day as he was leaving the Cairo Opera. For blocks ahead the streets were cleared of all traffic, and the people were kept on the sidewalk by police. The king's bright-red Rolls-Royce was preceded by motorcycles, an armed truck filled with troops, and two bright-red jeeps filled with soldiers and automatic rifles. Immediately before and behind his car were black sedans filled with plainclothesmen. No one else in Egypt is allowed to paint his car red, the royal color.

In fairness, it must be pointed out that Farouk is probably no better and no worse than most of the members of Egypt's ruling cliques. His personal morals and profligate living are patterned after those of the ruling pashas and effendis, which explains their tolerance for him—and, in turn, explains the king's hold on them.

## WORLD OF THE KORAN

AFTER the king, the next most powerful figure in Egypt was a solemn-faced, pious man in his seventies, his face distinguished but tired. His eyes, too, were tired, and his mouth sagged with the weariness of age. But as the rector of El Azhar University, Sheikh Mohammed Ma'moun el Shinawi provided the sinews for the Holy War against Zionism, just as his predecessors had furnished fanatic leaders who fought the Crusaders. I met Sheikh el Shinawi with Aboul Saud, a pleasant, English-speaking member of the Arab League Office. Every year El Azhar graduated hundreds of missionaries who preached its fanatic doctrine throughout Asia, Africa, and the islands of the Pacific. Founded in 792, for more than a thousand years El Azhar has been the academic shrine, as Mecca is the religious shrine, of 240,000,000 Moslems of the world.

Aboul and I walked to the university together. We found it in an ancient part of Cairo, surrounded by bazaars and native quarters. At the outer gate we left our shoes in charge of a doorman, and put on loose oversized straw slippers. The Koran requires that those entering a holy place must either wash their feet or cover their shoes with undefiled footwear. Stepping over a high wooden threshold, we entered one of the courtyards that served the students as classrooms. Hundreds of sheikhs-in-the-making were about, wearing the small red fez and white turban, with ankle-length black robes over lighter garments. They were sitting on the matted floors, legs crossed, in socks or bare feet, studying, reciting loudly, swaying to the rhythm of words, or else being tutored in small study groups by the *ulema*, religious teachers. They were ardent, intense, dark-skinned young men, completely absorbed in their labors.

I was with Aboul when classes were interrupted for prayers. What should I do now? While Aboul went through the ritual

of cupping his palms behind his ears, touching the floor with his forehead and mumbling his prayers, I faced Mecca on my knees, bent forward in a position that I hoped would be interpreted as respectful. When the prayers were over, I straightened up. This courtesy on my part was not missed by Aboul, who treated me with increased cordiality thereafter.

Though the prophet Mohammed died in A.D. 632, I found that at El Azhar his preachments were considered fresh and applicable today—with absolutely no modifications. The students I saw seemed to have no contact with reality, to recognize no social problems such as Egypt's seventeen million miserable *fellaheen*. I watched them copy by hand manuscripts in exquisite Arabic script. They pored over the Koran to see what Mohammed said about blood transfusion from Christian to Moslem. Aboul explained to me that Islam is not only an authoritarian religion, but also both a political creed and a way of life encompassing the sum total of a Moslem's temporal and spiritual existence.

"You might describe Mohammedanism as a religious form of State Socialism," he said. "The Koran gives the State the right to nationalize industry, distribute land, or expropriate property. It grants the ruler of the State unlimited powers, so long as he does not go against the Koran. The Koran is our personal as well as political constitution."

After we put on our shoes, we went to arrange a visit with the rector himself. In the office of his secretary, I asked one of the university officials to what extent El Azhar was helping the Arab League. "We are not only backing it, but we are leading the cause of the League," he said. "The Jews have oppressed the Arabs. We will permit them to do it no longer. Their knife has cut to our bone."

My audience with Sheikh Shinawi, who spoke in a foggy voice, was brief, for we had come without notice. He was wary of questions he considered "political," but he did reply when I asked him if he was afraid of the inroads of Communism.

"Islam," he said, "is the rock that will cause Communism

to recede." Mohammedanism had a powerful hold on the Arabs, he explained, because "it penetrates the human being without difficulty or mental effort." When I ventured to ask him about the role of El Azhar, his answer was one that I found difficult to reconcile with what I had seen so far:

"Moslems from all over the world come to drink from its fountain and be enlightened by its radiance. El Azhar has been the source of all progressive movements and social revivals. El Azhar has shown the way to all reformers and has shown the people their rights."

Was the sheikh acquainted with the Mufti?

"Indeed I know him," he said, his eyes brightening momentarily. "I know him personally and I like him very much."

We salaamed respectfully, and left.

It was about this time that I found plastered on the walls of Cairo buildings huge, luridly colored posters, violently anti-Jewish. One of them, showing a bloodstained dagger with the Star of David on its handle, and blood dripping from it, exhorted: "Arm Arabism!" Other posters read: "Don't talk to the Jews. . . . Don't do business with them. . . . Kill their business and they die. . . . Consider them as our deepest enemies."

A large colored placard, printed in English, Arabic, Spanish, French and Italian, showed a sketch that purported to be the desecration of a holy relic in Jerusalem by the Jews, and read:

#### ZIONISTS' NEW YEAR PRESENT TO CHRISTENDOM

The Archbishop of Canterbury, in a recent letter to the *Times*, said he would not entrust the Holy Land to the Zionists because he was sure they would lose no time in desecrating every relic of the Christ or the Prophet Mohammad to be found in the Holy Places.

The photo of the statue of the Virgin Mary in Ratisbonne Church, Jerusalem, battered beyond recognition and thrown

on the floor of the church, shows that the Archbishop's apprehensions were well-founded. His prophecy has come true.

I was told that this poster was put up by the Arab League.

Certain committees, posing as "patriotic," either mortgaged or bought land from Palestine Arabs, ostensibly to keep it from Jewish settlers. Arabs who refused to sell at low prices were branded tools of the Jews, and often murdered. Actually, the purpose of these committees was to extend the feudal powers of the landowners. I was told: "The Arab who sold his land to the Jews against our advice was killed at once. Anyone could kill him. No one would know *who*. The Arab's family and the families of other Arabs would know *why* he had been killed."

#### THE ARAB DREAM—ISLAM ÜBER ALLES

ONE of the Arab League's most eloquent spokesmen was a Roman Catholic convert named Assad Bey Dagher, whom I met through Aboul. Assad Bey briefed me at length on the League's ultimate aim: the unification of the Arab States from Gibraltar to Iraq. This would include Spanish and French Morocco, Algeria, Lybia, Tunis (these North African Moslem countries are collectively known as the Maghreb), Sudan, the Arab League States (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan), and Palestine, which was represented in the League by the Mufti.

"The Arab world would be like a giant bird, with the Maghreb countries comprising the left wing, the Arab States the right wing. Egypt would be the body and soul of the Arab bird," Assad Bey said to me. "There will be unity, uniform laws, the same money system, no customs barriers, and no need for passports for Moslems. Each State would have an independent tax system and its own army, but the manpower

and resources of one would be available to the other in all emergencies."

"How about Palestine?" I asked.

"The idea of Zionism must be uprooted so as never to recur in the mind of Jew or non-Jew. Once the Arab world is unified there will be no Zionism," Assad Bey said sternly. "Zionism is an obstacle. It cuts into the right wing of the Arab world. How can you have a continuous Arab civilization when European Jews set up a foreign nation in your midst?"

"Would you include Turkey and Persia in your scheme?" I asked.

"Neither Turkey nor Persia is Arab," he answered.

If the dream should come true, the Arab Empire would stretch in an unbroken chain from the Atlantic to the Arabian Sea for four thousand miles. It would boast a population of nearly seventy million and cover almost four million square miles of strategic territory. It would dominate the Suez Canal, Gibraltar, and all the oil and military resources of the area.

"Would not such a Moslem bloc again try to conquer Europe by the sword?"

"You are misinterpreting history," Assad Bey said coolly. "If you had read Islamic history, you would have known that Europe was invaded by Turks—not the Arabs. The Arabs were never aggressive. The Crusaders and the Zionists have been aggressors. They came from Europe to conquer Arab lands. Arab history is not well known to the West. The Arab religion is missionary. It seeks to expand but not to colonize. The Arab is not imperialist."

"How about the conquest of Spain?" I thought of asking Assad Bey.

What I had heard was the crux and the justification of the pan-Arab dream. While it had many obstacles—the chief being the Arab himself—the fever burned with intense heat among the nationalists. They had fired the imagination of millions of downtrodden Moslems. Amid their squalor they fed on visions of Islam *über alles*, and dreamt of better days

under a "greater Islam." This—it was becoming obvious to me—was the magic carpet that would make the Arabian Nights dream of women, song, and rivers of wine—Allah's paradise on earth—come true. It was a powerful stimulant to anti-Western agitation, regardless of Arab governmental changes, for the pan-Arab dream transcends all politics.

And come what may, His Majesty's Middle East Office was not only on the ground floor, but was helping in the maneuvers. I saw this on my visit to the Maghreb Office in Cairo, established to help the North African Arab States achieve their independence from France and Spain. Instead of, as I expected, meeting Arabs there, I was welcomed by a sharp-nosed, thin-lipped, toothy Englishwoman named Margaret Pope, a correspondent of the *London Observer*. Her comfortable apartment served as the Maghreb Office; her telephone number was its telephone number. I was served drinks and given information in a fashion that assumed I didn't know Algeria from Alabama. Throughout Europe and the Middle East the Americans, I realized, had built up a remarkable reputation for gullibility.

After Miss Pope had welcomed me, "Slim" appeared from somewhere. Slim—no surname given—was a fast-talking young man described to me as a Moroccan. He filled the propaganda plate. Both he and Miss Pope asserted that England was helping the Arabs achieve independence from Spanish imperialism in Algeria and the Moroccos.

"But isn't England also imperialist?" I ventured.

"Yes, she has been," Slim came back swiftly, in perfect English, accent and all. "But she has given independence to India and her other former colonies. There is also this difference between British and French imperialism. The British exploit the country economically. But the French also interfere with its religion, customs, and education. They seek to Frenchify a colony."

"The French enslave the soul of a people, as well as run dry the wealth of their country," Miss Pope added.

"And your view of conditions in other Moslem lands such as Spanish Morocco?" I asked.

"Franco is a beast and a bastard," Slim was carrying the ball now while Miss Pope listened approvingly. "Franco rules with an iron hand in a Fascist regime."

Slim had a perfect right to hate colonial exploitation. What I resented was the hypocrisy in whitewashing British colonial policy. General Clayton's name<sup>2</sup> was brought into the picture: "He is sometimes asked by the Arab States for advice. Most of the Arab League members are his friends," Slim said. Clayton was in charge of a special division in the Middle East Office "to maintain liaison with Arabs and give economic aid and advice."

A British writer aptly described the Maghreb Office as the "North African Nationalists' No. 10 Downing Street." It was used as a center of agitation against rival Spanish and French interests. As I saw it, once the Moslems had achieved their independence, England would slip in by the back door under the guise of "advising" the puppet regime it had helped create. Toward this end leaders of the Maghreb countries not only received propaganda training by the British, but also subsidies in money and other aid. Under veiled British direction Algerian, Tunisian, and Moroccan "Committees of Liberation" were formed. With imperialist England hated and reviled throughout the Middle East and Asia, England's only area of future exploitation lay in Africa. Toward this end the Maghreb Office, and similar bodies, worked overtime.

### THE GROWLING LION OF MOROCCO

BEFORE leaving I had won from Miss Pope and Slim the promise that in a day or two I could meet Emir Abd el Krim,

<sup>2</sup> Brig.-Gen. Iltid Nicholl Clayton, then in charge of His Majesty's Middle East Office. An influential policy-maker, he directed intrigue among the Arab States, and served as chief of Middle East intelligence.

the "Lion of Morocco." This famous leader of the Riff mountain tribes repulsed the combined assaults of the French and Spanish for six years before he was finally forced to surrender. He was then exiled for more than twenty years on Reunion Island in the Indian Ocean. Abd el Krim was now in Cairo.

The story of his "escape" from exile—portrayed as a romantic adventure by British writers—was as a matter of cold fact the outcome of an anti-French plot hatched in the Maghreb and Middle East Offices. Here's how it happened:

In May 1947, the French decided to transfer Abd el Krim to the Riviera. The French plan was to play him against the Sultan of French Morocco, championed by the British. As the ship carrying the Riff hero rounded the British protectorate of Aden, British agents informed the Maghreb Office in Cairo. The Maghreb puppets sprang into action. They clambered on board and urged him to jump ship immediately. . . . The Riff leader did so with his two wives and eleven children, asked for and was granted immediate asylum by King Farouk. No one was surprised except the French. The Maghreb Office went into ecstasies. Now His Majesty's Middle East Office had another trump card to play against its imperialist rival. This was the situation when I met Abd el Krim, with Slim serving as the interpreter.

Abd el Krim was cordial and agreeable. A short, broad-shouldered, muscular man of sixty-eight, he was dressed in a long white cloak striped with gray, pointed Moroccan slippers, and a white turban. His face was deeply lined, his nose prominent, his jaw jutting and covered with a thin gray goatee. The ends of his long mustache curled downward. The eyes were unusual: living coals, topped by shaggy brows. His eyes looked at you fiercely, as if to say: "Don't-try-to-cross-me-or-else." Abd el Krim spoke slowly, in a deep rich voice used to command. He took the lead by asking the first question.

"Why," he said casually, "do you in America hate Communism?"

"Because it's an authoritarian system that destroys liberty,

enslaves free men, makes a mockery of justice and democracy.”

“Those are exactly the reasons why we *hate imperialism*.” He ripped out the words in explosive Arabic. “It is true that most of us are not as well educated as you in the West, but the love of freedom is inborn in man. The lowliest peasant wants to rule his own destiny. Help us fight imperialism and we Arabs will help you fight Communism. I swear to you we will honor this pact.”

The impact of his assault, the intensity of delivery, took me by surprise. It gave an inkling of the way he had handled the Spanish and the French.

“America is a great and generous country. It means to do good. But it has helped Communism by encouraging imperialism. If Russia, yes, Communist Russia, promises to help us achieve independence, we will accept that help. We will take Russian arms and ammunition, but we will not let her in our country.”

I suspected this was easier said than done, but made no comment. Instead, I asked: “Are you opposed to British as well as Spanish and French imperialism?”

The Riff leader’s right hand went to his cheek in a thoughtful pose. I wondered why this arch foe of imperialism did not tear off my ear with an immediate blast.

“We consider British policy as being better than French or Spanish. We have seen how England gave freedom to India. England is becoming a friend of the Arab world,” he said through Slim.

This sounded too much like Slim. The use of the word “we” particularly was not typical of Abd el Krim, the desert chieftain. I wished I had a way of checking Slim’s translation.

“If England gave you help against the French, would you take it?”

“Yes, by all means.”

Abd el Krim now shifted ground and took the offensive again. “We cannot understand American policy. You have helped the Zionists and turned all the Arabs against you.

Time will show that you are wrong. But,” he pointed his finger at me, “if you make one more mistake you will turn the Maghreb countries against you, as well.”

“What mistake?” I asked.

“Helping Franco! There is talk of that. Helping Spain will only enable Franco to behave more brutally toward us. I hope you will not give loans to Spain. I hope you will not send military supplies that Spain will use against the Maghreb Arabs. I hope you will not make in Spain the mistakes you have already made in Palestine.”

## (CHAPTER VII)

## THE MARXIST UNDERGROUND



*"Russia will not fail us. I believe Russia will always support any movement which will help the Egyptian people. . . . But we will not talk of that now. . . . The use of force and other tactics will be decided when the correct time comes."*

Mahmoud Nabaoui, Egyptian Communist

EVER since my meeting with the students at Fouad University whom Gamal had described as Communist, I had wanted to see how the Communist party operated in Egypt, and what it stood for. In such a feudal, primitive, and violent land, an inquiry like this was a risky undertaking. But every investigation has its undercover approach.

I met my first nonstudent revolutionary at a secret meeting arranged by an Arab newspaperman who worked for a major American news agency in Cairo. Whether he was a member of the Marxist underground, I'm not prepared to say. All I know is that one day as the shadows of Mohammed Ali Mosque deepened over the adjoining native quarter, he produced Anwar Kamel. An intense young man, Kamel told me he had been jailed six times, first for Stalinist, then for Trotskyist activity, in which he was now engaged. He provided me with background that I needed.

"At first men like Sidky Pasha [former pro-English Egyp-

tian prime minister] suppressed the revolutionary movement," he began. "Sidky was a kind of Egyptian Mussolini. He had one idea—force. But you can't stop Marxism by force, or by laws, because its roots go very deep into the misery of the people. The Communist movement here really began in 1939 when students and intellectuals formed a group called Art and Freedom. We studied the theory of Communism, read Marx and Lenin, received literature from London and Paris; from America we got the *Daily Worker* and *The Militant*.<sup>1</sup> We also had revolutionary newspapers from Beirut, Damascus, and Baghdad. Nothing from Russia. It was wartime.

"Two years later Bread and Freedom replaced Art and Freedom," Anwar Kamel went on. "This was made up of a dynamic group of workers and intellectuals. Five hundred people used to come to our meetings. One day sixty of us were thrown in jail. We didn't meet in public after that. Today there are hundreds of cells, both Stalinist and Trotskyist, with five to ten men in each. Some of these cells receive their direction from the Democratic Movement for National Liberation. Names and leaders always change. They come and go. When one disappears another takes his place. But the revolutionary movement goes always forward, no matter what happens to the leaders.

"The Communists have lots and lots of money," Kamel said emphatically. "I have an idea it comes from Russia and is distributed through some satellite embassy. The Communists get some Egyptian supporters by buying them off. That is the weakness of their movement. Trotskyists are idealist revolutionary Marxists. We are strongly organized among the workers of the Mattaria Railway, and also among the textile workers."

Strikes were outlawed in Egypt, Kamel told me. Many occurred, nonetheless. Although union activity was permitted,

<sup>1</sup> Trotskyist organ published in New York by the Socialist Workers Party.



a federation of labor unions was not. A minimum-wage rule granted some five piastres a day—fifteen cents, a sum usually paid to child labor. Skilled, organized workers received up to about one dollar a day, or less than seven dollars for a 48-hour week, to support usually large families. Unorganized labor, which was in the great majority, got less—thirty to forty-five cents a day, usually, while a policeman earned about \$4.50 weekly, plus whatever graft he could pick up.

Leaving Kamel, I attempted to contact an avowed Communist, Fadhi el Ramli of the Socialist Front. No one knew where he could be found. After four days of guarded inquiry, I ventured to ask someone in the Press Department of the Arab League. To my amazement he looked into his address book and said: "Ramli's telephone number is 57381."

I telephoned at once, and spoke with Mrs. Ramli. I finally induced her to let me visit her home because of something "very important" I had to tell. I found the Ramlis living in a poverty-stricken area. Their home was on the second floor of an indescribably run-down tenement. The place was almost barren of furniture. A frightfully dark hole which I thought was a closet turned out to be an Egyptian poor-man's kitchenette—a blackish sink, a dripping faucet, surrounded by rat holes. Mrs. Ramli pointed to her son, a chubby little fellow having his feet washed in a dishpan.

"Him name Stalin," she said proudly.

I had candy with me and gave it to Baby Stalin. To Mrs. Ramli I offered Life Savers. If she had not been emancipated, I could never have met her face to face in her home. After tales of my association with "Henri Vallas, goot demokrat,"<sup>2</sup> and considerable persuasion, I convinced Mrs. Ramli to

<sup>2</sup> Unwittingly, but due mainly to his former association with the Progressive Party, Henry Wallace had become acceptable to Communists and leftist democrats alike throughout the Middle East. Although I had met Mr. Wallace briefly—only once, while he was vice president—I confess, with apologies to the well-intentioned Democrat who kept such bad political company, that I professed to know him much better than I actually did.

telephone her husband. She arranged for an appointment at the American Bar.

"But how will I recognize your husband?" I asked.

"Him I tell how you look," she said. "Him come to you in American Bar."

As I was leaving, little Stalin left the dishpan and ran to me for more candy. "Go ask your namesake for it," I said. "I haven't any more."

The American Bar proved to be a crowded cafeteria. As I browsed conspicuously just inside the door, a bulky dark-haired, dark-featured man approached me.

"Vallas Amerikan?" he said.

"You Fadhi el Ramli?" I asked.

"Aywa, aywa, yes, yes," he said, and I followed him to his table. Sitting there was a short intense Arab named Saleh Orabi, editor of *Telegraf* magazine, in Khartoum in the Sudan. He served as translator.

"The Communists could be the first party in Egypt because of the poverty of the masses," Ramli said. "The people listen to the Communists but are still afraid of the police. The workers are different. They have more courage. Eighty per cent of the labor leaders of Egypt are Communist."

"How do you define a Communist?" I asked.

"One who is a Marxist and believes in the Marxist revolution of workers. I am a Communist."

How about the "Socialist Front" under which he had (unsuccessfully) run for public office? Oh, *that*? That, said Ramli, was a device used to circumvent a law prohibiting Communists from holding office. Ramli was now advocating an "armed struggle against British imperialism." He emphasized that it was not directed against the Egyptian government. "But it has the same effect," Egypt's Communist added. "Every circumstance has its technique."

I asked if he believed violence was inevitable.

"If the reactionary system refuses all reforms, the only way to change it is by violence. When I speak of armed struggle against the English, it means I am thinking of guerrilla training against a government we will have to fight eventually."

"How long will it be before violence begins in Egypt?"

"It depends on the world situation," Ramli answered. "If economic conditions continue to grow worse, it will be sooner than if conditions were better. In Egypt the revolution will come about 1953. Egyptian feudalism is the best ally for Egyptian Communism."

"What about the Green Shirts and the Ikhwan? What role do they play?"

Ramli shook his head contemptuously. "Hussein and El Banna are outright Fascists," he said. "They are one of the greatest dangers to Egypt. They confuse the people. They talk social reform but they are backed by the pashas and clerical reactionaries."

And our interpreter nodded in agreement.

#### " . . . IN THE AGE OF FANATICISM"

THE next man I interviewed had been jailed so many times, he told me, that he had lost count. No formal charges had ever been lodged against him, nor was he usually brought before a judge. Whenever governments changed, or whenever those in power didn't like what he wrote, police hauled him away and he stayed in jail until official tempers cooled off, usually in less than a week. Dr. Mohammed Mandour was no Communist, but a rugged reformer-editor of *Soutul-Umma*, a liberal newspaper.

He was a tall, dignified man and spoke excellent English. He admired our Constitution and people, but had no love for our foreign policy, which he thought aped England's. Dr. Mandour had two special hates: the pasha class and the Eng-

lish. He claimed that the English exploited the pashas' fear of Communism, and that both together conspired to continue oppressing the Egyptian masses. In addition, he thought both British and pashas were whipping up anti-Zionist hysteria to postpone social reforms.

"Egypt is not in need of Communism," he said. "We don't want Communist help. We need reform from top to bottom, not revolution, which brings the dirty bottom to the top. I see hope. We will some day have a democracy, a constitutional monarchy like Sweden and Holland, where the real power rests with the people."

Dr. Mandour thought for a moment, then continued slowly:

"No people in the world are treated as miserably as our masses. A farmer sells his dairy products and vegetables and lives principally on cereals. He eats only eleven pounds of meat a year. Of about 5,500,000 acres of arable land, 2,000,000 belong to 1,500 pashas, including the royal family; 1,500,000 acres to some 12,000 landowners; about 500,000 acres are held by the *Wakf*,<sup>3</sup> leaving 1,500,000 acres for more than 3,000,000 *fellaheen*, less than a half acre each. The rest have nothing. They work as slave-tenants. Egypt's wealth is concentrated in less than one per cent of her population. One out of every two children dies before he reaches the age of five.

"Egypt could become the granary of the whole Arab world," he went on. "We could feed all our people if we used the Nile to irrigate the millions of acres of waste lands. Do you know that only three per cent of our country is cultivated? In the matter of poverty the average Egyptian is the richest man in the world. The average non-*fellah* family has an income of from \$75 to \$150 a year. We are in the hands of fanatics," Dr. Mandour said, now losing his professorial calm. "We are living in the age of fanaticism. Men who are

<sup>3</sup> Religious trusts, in which land is placed in the perpetual, tax-exempt custody of a religious association that assigns the income for charitable purposes. The executives are often under political control.

mad about money, power, imperialism. Men who think only of violence, revolution, dictatorship!"

### "RUSSIA WILL NOT FAIL US"

DR. MANDOUR told me about *El Gamaheer*, a Communist weekly. It was edited by the son of a rich landowner, Mahmoud Nabaoui. "His father is influential. The police are afraid that keeping him in jail will make a scandal," Dr. Mandour said.

My hunt for Nabaoui led me to the top floor of a tenement. I had to sell myself as a Wallace-booster and pro-Communist before I was admitted. Once in, I found myself in a room with a printing press, and had no difficulty in convincing a half dozen youths that it was important for me to contact Mahmoud Nabaoui. *El Gamaheer* (meaning *The People*) was a lurid affair, with the front and back covers printed in red ink, and carrying the usual wild party-line illustrations.

I met Nabaoui in a café, and we sat at a corner table for a quiet talk. He was a mousy type, twenty-six years old but looking younger. He had a short haircut, unusually deep-set eyes.

"Russia will not fail us," he said in answer to my question. "I believe Russia will always support any movement which will help the Egyptian people. . . . But we will not talk of that now."

What plans were there for the establishment of popular democracy in Egypt?

"We would like to achieve democracy the right way, by agitation," he answered. "The use of force and other tactics will be decided when the correct time comes. We cannot tell now what we will do." Nabaoui confirmed Ramli's observation that the majority of labor organizers were Communist, while about fifteen per cent were influential members of Ikhwan el Muslimin. "We already have 150,000 industrial

workers organized," Nabaoui said. "That is only one tenth of the industrial potential."

Nabaoui told me that the People's Liberation Movement had two thousand secret Communist members, meeting in cells. There was a Congress of Trade Union Workers, a Patriotic Committee for Workers and Students, and a Cultural and Scientific Association—all underground. "These," he explained, "take in most of the progressive workers, students, and intellectuals. We used to have the Popular University, which taught history, politics, and economics from the Marxist point of view, but Sidky Pasha shut it down. In 1946 we organized a National Front which brought together thousands of members and sympathizers under one leadership. Sidky Pasha suppressed this, too, and threw the leaders into jail."

"How are you financed?" I asked. Nabaoui hesitated a moment before answering. "My father gives me a monthly income. My wife also has means. *El Gamaheer* has a circulation of ten thousand and the proceeds from each issue just about meet expenses. Only two of our workers receive a salary—ten dollars a month each."

"Do you receive any funds from outside sources? From other countries?"

Nabaoui shook his head. "From Russia, never," he said.

No, not even from Henri Curiel, described to me as a leader of the Egyptian Communist movement. He was a mysterious figure who rarely appeared in public. The very fact that he was so well known was a sure indication, as far as I was concerned, that he was not a top man, but served as a front for others. He owned three bookstores and was reputed to have become wealthy from them. But in a country with eighty-five per cent illiteracy, it was difficult to understand how a bookseller could become rich.

I continued to press Nabaoui. Had Curiel other means of support? Nabaoui wouldn't tell. He suggested that I meet Curiel by dropping into the most prominent of his bookshops,

the Rond Point. When I went there I found three salesmen, all speaking English. I was astonished to see the large stock of out-and-out Communist propaganda, in English, French, and Arabic. I bought a booklet with a drawing of Lenin on the cover; one with a drawing of Marx; and a third on Tito. These were in Arabic. I bought *The Call of the Russian Church, Soviet News, and Russia Today*, all printed in London. I also bought *New Times*, published in Moscow, and an old copy of our own *Daily Worker*!

Curiel himself was not in. One of the salesmen said that Curiel's father would arrive at five o'clock. When I returned later, I saw behind the cash register an elderly man wearing dark glasses. I went directly to him and stretched out my hand. He did not respond. I realized he was blind. I told him I wanted to see Henri Curiel.

"Why do you want to see him? Are you a Communist?"

If I had said yes, it would have been difficult to live up to it when I met his son. If I said no, it might prejudice the old man against me, so I replied: "Don't make me answer that question now, please. I'll answer directly to Henri."

It was the correct response because the old man smiled. "You will contact Henri through my daughter-in-law," he said. "Telephone her at 57270."

I phoned immediately and talked to the old man's wife, who said her daughter-in-law would be in at eight o'clock. When I called at eight, I reached the younger woman. Would I call back again tomorrow?

I phoned. I phoned for the next two days and each time was politely brushed off both by the young and the older Curiels. Finally I lost my temper and demanded a showdown. Just as angrily, young Mrs. Curiel snapped back: "You have talked to Mahmoud Nabaoui. You have asked him many questions; you have asked questions about finances. We do not know who you are, or why you ask such questions. I will try to get someone else to speak to you, but I will have to ask my husband first."

Frustrated, I appealed to the Arab newspaperman who had been my first contact. He knew Curiel and would do his best. But Curiel flatly refused to see me.

Allah must have had a hand in all this, for as it turned out, Curiel's refusal saved me from a grave predicament. Two days later Cairo newspapers broke out in headlines: "Police Yesterday Discovered the General Headquarters of the Egyptian Communist Party." They had raided a tenement on Suleiman Pasha street and discovered "extremely important documents revealing the address of all the cells and names of the heads of the movement throughout the country." Important papers also showed "connection between these cells and foreign countries."

Prior to the raid, they had placed the evasive Curiel under twenty-four hour surveillance, and trailed him to his secret headquarters. He was now in jail. Had I met Curiel, I, too, would have been followed, certainly arrested for questioning, and would probably have had a taste of Cairo prison life. With my police record of camera forays and my curious friendships, I would have been in a difficult position.

### LIBERATION AT LAST!

I decided to keep out of sight for a while. I remained in my room at the Continental for several days, had my meals brought up, and ventured out only at night for a few urgent telephone calls I feared to make from the hotel. I telephoned Hussein repeatedly. When do we start for Palestine? I demanded. "Any day now," he said. "Wait. Be patient. Be patient. This is not America."

Wait. Wait. Wait. No wonder it was said that an Arab spends half his time in waiting, the other half in wishing. I determined I could wait no longer. I would have to revert to my original plan and go to Palestine by myself, even though

such travel now was particularly dangerous. I took the bull by the horns and approached the British Embassy for a visa to Palestine. It was not easy to obtain, and only after I came with a letter recommending me as a "keen and reliable historian of the present" was I granted it. I was now prepared to enter Palestine legally as a newspaperman.

I made other preparations. I suggested to Moustafa Momen, one of the leaders of the Ikhwan, that he give me a letter of introduction vouching for my devotion to the Arab cause. It would help me in Palestine, I told him. After some consultation, Momen wrote the following letter, which was to prove extremely valuable to me:

To Generous Brother El Sayed Safer el Shawa  
Head of the Brotherhood  
Gaza

Greetings: God's Mercy and Blessings Be with You!

I present to you Mr. —, the American correspondent. He has already visited the general headquarters of the Brotherhood in Cairo and has had an interview with the Supreme Guide. He has met Brother Mahmoud Labib Bey, who promised he would let him visit the Brotherhood camp in Gaza and Khan Younis and take the necessary pictures. It is requested that he be taken to Brother Mahmoud Labib Bey, so that he might visit the camp with him.

God's Mercy and Blessings Be with You!

From the Green Shirts I obtained an identity card with my photograph, in addition to a similar letter signed by Hussein, reading:

The bearer of this is Mr. —, an American-Armenian photographer, who came to Egypt and visited our party, and took some pictures to publish in the American magazines. Despite the fact that the Arab League had cleared him, we [also] investigated his actions, and found that his mission is cultural only. . . . He may be permitted to take photographs that the

Arab Mujahedeen [Holy Warriors] may think [will] help their cause in the world.

Armed with these letters—one from each of the opposing camps—and a card from the Arab League accrediting me as a correspondent, an Ikhwan membership button showing the Koran and the crossed swords, as well as a green beret and armband of the Green Shirts, I felt reasonably safe. I might add that I also had a notarized statement certifying my Christian religion, and a large button showing the Mufti and the Arab colors.

Another stroke of good luck befell me when Hussain Aboul Fath, publisher of *Al Misri*, one of Egypt's leading newspapers, asked me to serve as a special Palestine correspondent, and gave me a letter of introduction. With the help of this, I obtained a document even more valuable to me: a letter of approval from the Mufti's own headquarters, the Arab Higher Committee, attesting to my sympathy with the Arab cause. I added this endorsement to my growing collection.

Then, one night at my hotel, I found a message to telephone Hussein.

"Tomorrow the boys are leaving! Be ready! Come early!" he screamed excitedly.

I spent a feverish night packing, discarding excess items, writing letters and destroying others. I assembled my precious notes and film negatives in tightly packed bundles and placed false labels on them. I put beside my bed an Arab *khaffiya* that I would wear, and my Green Shirt armband. To hold my various credentials, I sewed secret pockets in the nondescript khaki uniform I had bought. Just as I had finished listing a number of small items I had to buy, the donkey brayed. It was tomorrow already. I grinned. I had heard that donkey for the last time.

My liberation came at six o'clock on the morning of March 31.

*Allah rabim!* Allah is indeed merciful!

## OFF FOR THE HOLY WAR!



*"If we Moslems choose to spit on the Jews we could drown them. . . . We will crush the microbe of Zionism forever. . . . You will see how we fight like Allah's own messengers!"*

Arab man-on-the-street

CAIRO'S mood, the hour before our departure, was one of excitement or terror—depending on your religion. Jews were imprisoned because they were Zionists, and beaten on streets because they were Jews. They huddled in their homes, afraid to leave, afraid to worship on the Sabbath because the Ikhwan had spread rumors that synagogues were used for "plotting." Newspapers daily whipped up new excitement with news from Palestine: FIERCE BATTLE IN HOLY CITY'S NO-MAN'S LAND. . . . HAIFA EXPRESS BLOWN UP AGAIN. . . . MARTIAL LAW PROCLAIMED. . . . There were celebrations as news of the dynamiting of the Jewish Agency building in Jerusalem, by a car carrying TNT and "flying an American flag," was announced, and later when Arabs ambushed a large convoy near Bethlehem, seized scores of vehicles, and killed many Jews. Under Arab League sponsorship, Fawzy Bey el Kawoukij (who had spent the war years in Germany, marrying there<sup>1</sup>) had begun to attack with his Yarmuk Army of Liberation.

<sup>1</sup> For other details of his stay in Germany, see Chapter XXII.

Arabs everywhere were confident of victory. They gloated over their arms, their money, their numbers. "If we Moslems choose to spit on the Jews we could drown them," one said contemptuously. From another: "We are like a ball of snow. We have just begun to roll. We will crush the microbe of Zionism forever."

The Arab Goliath of eight States and forty-five million people would win over a tiny, sausage-shaped, "militarily indefensible" area, encircled by Arabs, and containing 650,000 poorly armed Jews and a fifth column of at least as many Arabs. There was no doubt that the Arabs would win easily. They said so.

## WE'RE OFF AT LAST

A TAXI brought me to Green Shirt headquarters early in the morning of April 1. It was a scene of wild confusion. Excited orders were being shouted every moment. Two telephones jangled constantly. I announced myself to Ahmed Hussein and also to Moustafa, who had acquired a pistol and a cartridge belt. After this, I waited quietly by the door. Nothing in the Arab world, I knew, is done quickly or on time. Whatever the Arab's other talents, if there is a complex or a long way around, he is likely to take it instead of the simple and efficient way. Then, too, the average Arab finds it difficult to subordinate his fierce independence to the demands of teamwork. Two instincts: to rebel against an order, or to give one himself, clash within him immediately. The result is often a great deal of verbal thunder, but little actual accomplishment.

And so, I waited patiently for the snowball to start rolling. Shortly after noon, Hussein hurried up to me. "Do you have your camera?" I patted my hip pocket. "Good," he said. "Come with me."

We hastened to two waiting automobiles. Hussein, his officers, Moustafa, Sheikh Azaayim, and I climbed into them, and off we went. We arrived at a quarter dense with milling natives, the women completely covered, despite the sweltering heat, in black clothing, and hordes of sticky children everywhere. Excitement reigned, with screaming and screeching going on everywhere. On the narrow dirt street, a half dozen sturdy American-made trucks were lined up. Everybody was directing the loading of tins of gasoline, sacks of flour and grain, onions, olives, Vickers machine-guns, and rifles. Dressed incongruously in riding breeches, trim American military coat (obtainable in Cairo's bazaars for five dollars), and white flowing headdress, Sheikh Azaayim, leader of the Followers of Truth, pitched in and began to direct all the directors—no easy job!

"Artour, Artour!" It was Hussein. "Take pictures. We are making history!"

Catching quicksilver is far easier than getting Arabs to pose naturally for a group photo. The camera must be quicker than the Arab, which is impossible! They strut, they simper, they push one another to get in the front. Finally they line up like a jumbled mass of upright sticks, each in a theatrical pose. I took a number of such pictures, with Arabs three layers deep, Ahmed Hussein, Sheikh Azaayim and Moustafa in front. . . . I confess I was getting to like Moustafa more and more. He was a born leader and always seemed to be calm. I kept close to him.

Above the din someone started to yell "Yallah!" It was taken up by the Followers of Truth, by the men, the women, the children. The native quarters rang with "Yallah!" It's a universal Arab phrase, meaning "Let's go!"

Two hundred of us piled into the trucks. Everybody was screaming at the top of his voice. Women leaned out of the long-shuttered windows waving ecstatically at us. Then they suddenly began emitting shrill tremolo cries, their tongues rapidly darting in and out, palms clapping their mouths,

American Indian fashion. It is a native custom called *zag-hareed*. An old man with fierce features brandished a thick cane and yallah'd us on. The trucks started their grinding motors, adding to the racket. And now, like a cacophonous orchestra, came the noise of rasping horns, followed by children screaming, and mothers squealing to get them into the doorways. The six roaring motors sounded like a squadron of B-29's. Clouds of dust swept up, hiding the houses, the women, and the children from view. Our send-off was nothing short of triumphal. I wondered, fleetingly, if the Followers of Truth would return the same way.

We rode through narrow, twisting streets and then our cavalcade of trucks turned into a broad boulevard. Banners flying, the Followers of Truth broke into a chant: "We are going to fight for Allah, and Allah will protect us from harm." They kept it up, word for word, as we roared toward the heart of Cairo, speeded on by deafening cheers from the crowds. We stopped all traffic at every intersection. The trucks screeched to a halt in a highly congested area. A crowd collected. Men broke through to the front and began to deliver impassioned speeches. "We want to come with you. . . . Kill them till the ground is red. . . . Bring Palestine back with you. . . ."

"Artour, Artour!" It was Moustafa waving me off the truck.

"I've been recognized," was my first thought.

"Hurry up," Moustafa called. "They want you."

I began clambering down.

"Hurry, Artour," I felt a violent tugging. "They want you to take pictures!"

I almost hugged Moustafa. . . . I saw that we were in front of the office of *El Ahram*, a Cairo daily. It was dusk. A satisfactory photograph would be difficult. I called a chunky Follower of Truth, and made him bend over to serve as a tripod. Green Shirts, Followers of Truth, Hussein, Azaayim, a policeman, and people off the sidewalk lined up in the usual jumble. My reputation as a photographer was at stake. "Hold these people still for just *one second*," I begged Moustafa.

How he ever did it is a tribute to his genius for command. He also went so far as to order the man whose back I was using to stop breathing.

I hastily shot several one-second exposures. I took the film into the *El Ahram* and gave instructions. Eventually I saw the printed photograph. To my gratification it came out surprisingly clear.

"As our official photographer, you must sit up in front with us," Moustafa announced. "Don't worry about your bags. I am in charge of this truck." He spoke to the men on top. They carefully covered my luggage with blankets, and one of them was held accountable.

#### TEA, DRUG, AND HASHEESH

THE sun had set in a blaze of golden flame and the horizon was still glowing. Our trucks rolled past the outskirts of Cairo and rumbled into the darkness. I was squeezed in between Moustafa and the driver. Behind us the Followers of Truth kept up their monotonous, rhythmic chant: "We are going to fight for Allah, and Allah will protect us from harm."

"The Jews are praying too," I said. "To which side will Allah listen?"

"To ours," Moustafa said. "You will see how we fight like Allah's own messengers!"

Our driver, a plump Bedouin, presently complained that he was getting tired. At the next village we stopped in front of a "smoke house." It was a dirt-brown little place, serving as a restaurant, coffee house, gossip hangout—and something more. *Fellahs* in dirty *gallabiyas* leaned against the walls, or sat on the earthen floor or in crude, straw-bottomed chairs, feet dangling, alternately spitting and smoking the nargileh, the water-pipe. Others were drinking a syrupy, tar-black tea, which acted like a mild narcotic.

I saw our driver go straight to the proprietor behind a grimy

counter, a deformed man with a closed eye. A few minutes later he returned, holding a tiny package of brown paper. He kissed it with a loud smacking of the lips, and carefully put it in his inside pocket. We drove on. . . . He was a happy man now, humming a tune.

"Did he drink tea?" I asked Moustafa.

"No, not tea," he answered mysteriously.

I could no longer contain my curiosity. "What did he take?" "Hasheesh."

"How often does he use it?"

"All the time. It keeps him awake, and gives him a feeling that he is strong and has no worries."

"But isn't it habit-forming?"

Moustafa shrugged his shoulders. "He doesn't think about it when he takes it."

Our driver had paid fifty cents for a few grams.

We drove through the night, halting at long intervals to see that all the trucks were with us. The chanting had stopped now. Under the moonlight the Followers of Truth slept and snored on the grain sacks. At one o'clock we arrived in Ismailia, crossing-point of the Suez Canal. Palestine was 140 miles to the northeast, across the desert sands. Not far from here Moses and the Israelites, fleeing from Pharaoh, camped before crossing the Red Sea. But this was no time for such reflections. We were all weary from the long day and its excitement, anxious to cross the canal by ferry that very night and set up camp in the Sinai Desert. The trucks pulled up under pine groves that lined the canal. Green Shirts and Followers of Truth got off the trucks, arrayed themselves against the trees, the banks, the truck, and relieved themselves.

The Suez Canal proved our temporary Waterloo. Through some technicality, the customs official would not let us through. Perhaps everything hadn't yet been tried—a little *baksheesh*, bribe, for instance? *Ma'alesh!* No matter, it could wait until morning. Followers of Truth spread out their blankets—on the very places they had watered—and pulled



them over their heads. Shrouded, immobile figures, they lay grotesquely along the roadway and in the clump of pines.

I had no blanket, so I curled up on the driver's seat of our truck. The night was cold. I was wearing my nondescript khaki uniform and my flowing *khaffiya*. Unable to sleep, I walked to the canal's edge and dipped my fingers into the water. It was surprisingly warm under the cold air. I sat down by the bank and pulled my knees up to my chest. I stuffed the cuffs of my trousers inside my socks and pulled up the socks in an attempt to husband as much warmth as possible. I sat there, huddled up and shivering. The ferry that would take us over tomorrow was moored to the bank on my right. The moon kissed the shimmering waters, but its light made the desert beyond seem all the more bleached and forbidding. I could see the road snaking from the opposite bank and losing itself in the bleak Sinai waste. A merchant ship churned slowly up the canal, its lights ablaze, moving through the water with a soft muffled sound. The waves lapped softly against the shore; then all was stillness again. There was only a tiny light gleaming in the customs office; nothing in the adjoining tent where Sheikh Azaayim slept, apart from his men. Six of his men guarded the entrance. In the dimness I could see the others. Moustafa, I knew, was somewhere among them.

I returned to my truck. The hasheesh-drunk driver was slumped over the wheel snoring peacefully. I dozed off in fits and starts. The cold drove me out again, prowling about for warmth. Then the sun broke over the bleached Sinai sands, a radiant, blazing sun that brought with its warmth, life, hunger. The water and the ferry took shape, and the birds began their chirping in the pine grove. It was also time for the Followers of Truth to water the roadbanks, en masse.

Moustafa and I went to the bank and washed in the salt water. I loaned him my comb. "Keep it, Moustafa, I have another one." He was grateful. Almost anything I said or did for him evoked his gratitude.

I noticed now that there were twelve Green Shirt regulars.

(I counted myself among them, as distinguished from the Followers of Truth.) We were more Europeanized. Our clothing (except mine) was mostly United States army surplus, or parts thereof, with Green Shirt insignia. We didn't chant about Allah protecting us from harm. Nearly all spoke some English. In addition to Moustafa, there was Captain Zaki, wearing an Egyptian army uniform, who was now "on leave," like hundreds of others. There was Sabri, Moustafa's closest friend, and Mahmoud, the most dapper amongst us. I found myself with these four most of the time.

"Let's eat," Moustafa said.

While Captain Zaki and Sheikh Azaayim haggled with the customs officials, seven of us climbed a near-by sand dune and sat down to breakfast. It consisted of black olives, raw onions, and stale *kmaj*—thin, brownish, round-shaped bread, a half inch thick. We spread the food on a newspaper and devoured it in record time. Captain Zaki and the sheikh met us with long faces. The customs officials were adamant. They had received special orders from the Ministry of Interior not to let us through.

"Is it because I, an American, am with you?" I asked Moustafa.

"No, Artour. There are other reasons. We will camp at Ismailia, and sneak into Palestine in small groups. *Yallah!*"

"*Yallah! Yallah! Yallah!*"

The call served as a bugle cry. Nothing had been unloaded, so we clambered into the trucks, drove through Ismailia's business district, and on to an outlying mud-built village that comprised the native quarter. This was to be home for the next four days, while we devised plans to steal into Palestine.

#### BEHIND THE NATIVE CURTAIN

FOLLOWERS of Truth encamped on the street, in front of a grocery store. The grocer provided them with a huge tent

of Oriental rugs and canopies. While Sheikh Azaayim stayed at the home of the grocer, as a distinguished guest, we of the Green Shirts—twelve strong—were directed to a building near by, where we were jammed into a tiny-windowed room about fifteen feet square, with a low ceiling, one bed, and a divan.

The people about us lived with their animals, went to bed with them, and woke up at the same hour with them. Nearly every native was barefooted, and went to bed unwashed, got up the next morning and went through the grime of the streets, and then went to bed again without ever bathing his body or feet, until the dirt and dung caked on them and formed a leathery protective coating. I was convinced that soap and water alone could never remove it. The street on which we made our home was typical of provincial Egypt. All day long, adults urinated against the walls, while children and teen-agers splashed their excrement anywhere, usually near the base of the walls, so that it was positively unsafe to walk anywhere but in the middle of the street. Even though the dung soon dried in the intense heat of day, swarms of green-black flies always festered there, especially when someone stepped on the mounds. Garbage was cast indiscriminately in the streets. All day long women threw pansful of house water into the streets. *Ma'alesh!*

Hordes of children played among the refuse, and the inevitable droppings of donkeys, dogs, cats, chickens, camels, and horses. Pitiful, scab-covered, undersized children with running eyes scurried about, sores untreated, hair uncombed week after week till it was matted like the underside of a pig. They spilled out of their homes in the morning like ants from an anthill. They looked exactly as the night before, and the morning before, and the night before that. Their clothes, consisting sometimes of underwear, but usually only a nightshirt, had apparently not been washed since they had been sewn into garments. The first morning I saw a child, its face covered with scabs, its nose running. I saw the same child in the evening with the matter solidifying beneath his nose down

to the lips. The next morning he was the same, save that a fresh layer was being added to the collection of dirt of the last few days.

As for the women, they seemed to be the main repository of filth. Whenever they washed—usually in a contaminated river—they went into the water dressed, and in groups, washing their dirty clothes and dirty bodies at the same time. Clay or a piece of soft wood usually served as soap. In many villages the women never washed thoroughly except on the occasion of their marriage and once a year at the feast of Bairam. It was comforting to see them go around with faces veiled, for the few who were uncovered were revoltingly ugly.

It was within ten miles of our quarters that the first death in Egypt's cholera epidemic of 1947 occurred—a small native village, like ours!

The food we ate was primitive, typical native fare. Our staple diet was *tamia*, ground chickpeas mixed with parsley and onions, seasoned with garlic and blazing-hot pepper, and fried patty-shape like hamburgers. We had *fasoulia*, red kidney-beans, the poor man's food because it was so cheap. We also had *fool*, fava-beans. We had *fool* and *fasoulia*, morning noon and night, with the addition of raw onions and black olives. I had no idea how the food was prepared, for no man dared go into the kitchen where the grocer's wife and relatives cooked our rations. At times I wondered about the water we drank. Such things had better be left to Allah, who saw everything anyway. I thought that if I survived this ordeal I'd survive anything.

Our first night here came at the end of a hot and dusty day. A tiny gas-lamp cast its yellow glow over one corner of the cell we called home. As the other eleven Green Shirts came in, they removed their shoes and stockings and wriggled their toes to let the air circulate between them. Barefooted, some went to the dark fenced-off enclosure in the courtyard. This was the community toilet. You brought your own paper. At night a tiny dim lantern hung inside, but only the buzzing

swarms of flies could possibly see any better by it. The stench that rushed up from the center opening of the sewer was absolutely unbearable. *Ma'alesh!* You were supposed to get used to it.

Upon returning, they sat down at the table without further ceremony or washing. The table was a circular piece of smooth wood, about three feet in diameter and set eight inches above the floor in the center of our room. The food was piled high on platters. We seated ourselves crosslegged. Then, *yallah!* We reached with our hands. First come, first served. I learned to eat Arab fashion, without knife, spoon, or fork. I would dip a piece of flat bread, *kmaj*, into the common pool, holding it between the thumb and three fingers, scoop the food with a half turn of the wrist and bring it up quickly, tilting the head backward to keep the juices from running down the corners of my mouth. At first aim, I miscarried the scoopful of *fasoulia*, and it burst above my nose like shrapnel, distributing the beans all over my face. *Ma'alesh!* I pushed them into my mouth with fingers that were greasy anyway. A few sessions made me fairly skillful though I lacked speed and finesse. In due time I acquired both.

"You are now a full Arab," Moustafa complimented me.

Next day it became evident that we'd remain stranded. I went with Moustafa, Captain Zaki, Sabri, and Mahmoud to Ismailia. I found it a colorful and, in spots, a pretty little city. There was an abundance of water, and some of the tree-lined boulevards were extremely attractive. English officers lived here with their families. Soldiers from near-by camps were everywhere.

We were ravenously hungry, so I treated everyone to a lunch of kebab—square cuts of skewered lamb—after which we moved to a sidewalk café and Moustafa ordered coffee and tea. Native life ebbed and flowed around us. Children carried blue beads to ward off the evil eye; here a cobbler was soling shoes with old tire rubber; there a tinsmith fashioned houseware from discarded cans; from the entrance of a grimy

butcher-shop chunks of raw meat hung from iron hooks. A lively backgammon game was in progress at an adjoining table, with a half dozen tanned, turbaned *fellaheen* watching; a camel train passed by, each camel linked to another by ropes; down the street, a house was being built with mud bricks. A fight started at the corner. The rush-bottomed café chairs were emptied.

Moustafa had been suffering for some time with a sore toe. In his last encounter with the Haganah a bullet had grazed it. He showed me the wound, which had become infected.

"You had better see a good doctor right now before it gets worse."

"I will go to the barber," Moustafa said. After our coffee, we all went to the barber. While Captain Zaki and Mahmoud were being shaved, the barber opened Moustafa's bandages. Using only warm water to wash the toe, and no antiseptic of any kind, he lanced it with a jack-knife. Then he used waste cotton to bandage it.

"That man is worse than a butcher, Moustafa."

"Never mind, Artour. He's an Arab doctor."

"*Yallah!*"

*Yallah* this time was to the outskirts of Ismailia, where Mahmoud said he wanted to visit relatives. Zaki stayed behind, giving the excuse that he was tired. We walked for nearly an hour through the broiling sun, through one native quarter after another, going slowly because Moustafa's toe was extremely painful.

"Mahmoud must love his relatives to walk all this distance in this dust!"

"He loves them very much." Moustafa and Sabri changed glances.

At last we reached the outskirts, and came to the edge of a large empty lot. Beyond this I saw more of the squat, mud-baked huts that made up the native quarters. This sand-lot was particularly malodorous, or perhaps the wind was blowing the wrong way. As we walked, a new form of stench filled the

air. It wasn't offal. This was something more pungent, awesome, sickening, carnal, like a decomposing cat. Now I became aware of what seemed to be a hole, about fifty feet square, ahead of us. Our path skirted to the left of the sand-pit. As we came to it, I took one glance and jerked my head away. The pit was filled with the rotting flesh of dogs, cats, horses, cows, and other dead animals. It was an open burial ground. Part of the carrion still clung to the bones. Other parts had been eaten away by the neighborhood cats and dogs. Strands of fur hung to the decomposing flesh. The sun had bleached white the skulls and skeletons, and the stench that rose to God's blue sky was the most nauseating in my experience. . . .

"Where is this — relative of Mahmoud's?" I yelled uncontrollably.

"On the other side of this field, the first house," Moustafa said, smiling.

At long last we reached the first house. Instead of veiled women, we saw women with their faces exposed. Three trollops were sitting on the stoop, their legs wide apart. It required no effort to see that they were shaven—in keeping with an Arab custom that is said to apply to all classes of women, and is intended to keep them clean in the hot climate.

"Are these his relatives? An hour's walk across that stench hole to visit *these!*" I screamed at Moustafa.

"If you want to learn Arab life, you must know about Mahmoud's relatives."

Mahmoud looked the girls over, chose one, and went inside with her. Moustafa and Sabri talked to the other two. Business was slow at this time of day, for the sun overhead was blazing, and only a frustrated fool like Mahmoud would make the venture.

"The women have visitors when it's cool, from six o'clock till midnight."

We waited a half hour . . . three quarters of an hour . . . one full hour!

"What can Mahmoud be doing there all this time? Surely your women can't be different from ours."

"But our ways are different," Moustafa insisted.

At last Mahmoud emerged. He looked as though he had been through a steam bath.

"What's different about your ways?" I asked Moustafa a little later.

"First of all Mahmoud had hashcesh. Then he bought the woman some. This makes much difference in what happens afterward. You cannot cut short your visit. You can't!" Moustafa and Sabri giggled. "This is why our method is different, and why Mahmoud was in so long. . . . After the woman," Moustafa continued to explain, "he had a hot bath. Now he can fight the Jew with a clean body."

#### MUTINY!

BUT it was I who almost died with a dirty body, for the next night I was almost stabbed, with my back to the wall. . . . After three days and three nights of forced confinement in cramped quarters and continual frustration, the sizzling Arab temper provided the final catalytic. Sharp distinctions arose between East and West: Followers of Truth on the one hand, and the Green Shirts on the other.

Sheikh Azaayim, leader of the Followers of Truth, was running low on the food we had brought. And the grocer, a tack-headed capitalist, was showing little appreciation for our noble mission. He was gouging Azaayim with high prices for additional food, rental, and incidentals. "My" side blamed Azaayim for botching the whole thing. The sheikh, with more truth, blamed the Green Shirts for staging a public parade and inviting the wrath of government officials who, mindful of the Green Shirt record during the war, had no desire to harbor any armed and trained private armies in Egypt. Moustafa and

Captain Zaki threatened to leave, depriving the Followers of Truth of military leadership. The sheikh insisted they must remain. "After all, I brought you here. I've paid you. I've fed you and housed you in comfort." The Green Shirts countered by saying they had left Cairo to fight the Jew in Palestine, not stagnate in a pigsty. The atmosphere was charged with tension. East and West henchmen rarely spoke now, except in anger, hands on revolvers or daggers. I tried to be friendly to both sides, and keep out of the family quarrel. One reads about "explosive" situations. This was it! If anything blew up, I knew I'd be in the middle of it, for the Arab temper, usually quiescent, once aroused becomes blind in its passions.

That night once again I heard the chant: "We are going to fight for Allah and Allah will protect us from harm." As we weren't going anywhere, I wondered why the war cry this time of night. It continued for an hour and was driving us to desperation.

"They don't know any better." Moustafa said. "They are fanatics!"

I decided to investigate.

"Don't stay away long," Moustafa warned. "They don't like us—and especially they don't like Americans. Don't go inside their tent."

I walked past their sentry. "Assalamu aleikum. Peace be upon you," I said.

"Wa aleikum salam," he grunted. "Upon you peace."

I opened the tent flap. The sight was common enough. Against a background of colored canopies and rugs, the *fellaheen* fighters, crosslegged on mats, were swaying rhythmically, in perfect accompaniment to the weird chant. Their eyes were half-closed as if under trance, their faces feverish. This was *Jehad*, in the making. I had no doubt that some of them had taken *hasheesh*. The leaders were reading responsively to the chant from dog-eared copies of the Koran. Some Followers of Truth were in their American army surplus khaki, in full battle dress, with steel helmets, cartridge belt, daggers and all.

I had already photographed one of them with his "gizzard slitter"—the name I gave to a particularly ugly dagger, the handle of which was a brass knuckle. There seemed to be stranger elements among the Followers of Truth. They were wearing calico skullcaps and *gallabiyas*. These vicious thugs had arrived the day before. Moustafa told me he suspected them of being imported to fight the Green Shirts if a show-down battle developed.

The chanting stopped as I entered. Glares took its place. I offered to take pictures. The Followers obeyed in surly fashion, not because they liked me or wanted to be photographed, but because Sheikh Azaayim had approved my photography. I took several flashlight photos. Then I tried to leave. But they stepped up and wanted to see the prints at once, poking their long dirty nails into the shutter opening. Trying to protect my precious camera, I explained somehow that they would have them by *sabah*, by morning. They went away, sullen, and I stepped into the night.

While inside I had noticed movements at the farther end of the tent, a closed portion, with figures constantly brushing against the canopies. I passed the sentry and went to the farther end of the tent to investigate. I was about to lift the flap, when I felt myself jerked up by the neck to an upright position and slammed against the wall of the grocery store. At the same time a sharp hard object was jabbed against my left side. A scant six inches from my nose was the outline of a frenzied face and bared teeth. Hot, carnal breath, and a hot volley of words I did not understand poured out at me. Strong fingers with sharp nails were tightened around my throat, so that breathing became difficult, and I was unable to cry out. To rip away the choking fingers would, I was sure, have resulted in being jabbed with the knife. My only defense lay in dirty alley fighting.

I was about to kick my assailant viciously in the groin, and simultaneously push away the knife blade, when I heard the cracking of bone against bone, and a knuckled fist smashed

against the face. It was Moustafa to the rescue! The Follower of Truth hit the dust. As he came up, knife brandished in mid-air, Moustafa whipped out his revolver and pointed it straight at the heart of the enraged *fellah*. In low, guttural words, hardly audible beyond our intimate circle, I heard Moustafa growl at my would-be assassin the equivalent of: "One more step, and you're a dead son of Allah!"

"Go back into the room, Artour," Moustafa commanded.

I waited for him at the entrance to the grocer's home.

"Now Followers of Truth will surely try to kill you, Moustafa," I said.

"Not me alone, but you, too, and all the Green Shirts," he answered calmly. "We will have to be ready for them. Come."

I touched him on the arm. "Moustafa, you saved my life. What I have is yours. Wish it, and you shall have it." I meant every word. At the same time, I was following Arab tradition.

Moustafa hesitated. "I want your friendship, Artour."

"You shall have my loyalty as long as I live."

We hurried to our suffocating flea-hole and alerted the boys. They made sure revolvers were loaded, daggers ready, and used what little furniture there was to barricade the door. This immediately cut off our only escape because our single barred window looked into a blind alley.

"I am sorry to have caused you all the trouble," I said to Moustafa and Zaki. "If I go away maybe things will quiet down. I'll go gladly."

"Don't be afraid for our sake," Moustafa said. "If you are afraid for yourself, then we can't stop you from going."

"I'll stay."

In my shirt pocket, over my heart, were three little objects, chained together. First, a medallion with the Madonna and Child of the Armenian Church. It had been tied to my bedpost as a child, and Mother believed the *Maryam Asdvadzamayr yev Christos* (Mary, Mother of Jesus, and the Christ Child) would protect me on my journey. Attached to it was

a St. Christopher's medal that a Catholic friend had given me for the same purpose. The third object was a Jewish *mezuzah*, a tiny metal tube in which was a paper scroll with the Ten Commandments inscribed upon it, given to me by a Jewish friend to insure my safe return. With these in my hand, I silently prayed now, summoning all three faiths to my protection. Sheikh Azaayim had got drunk earlier in the evening, and was now sleeping it off. It wasn't likely that his men would attack without his orders, but anything might provide the spark and touch off the *Jehad*-crazed, *hasheesh*-maddened Followers any minute.

With the boys listening to every sound to forestall a surprise attack, there was no sleep that night. Moustafa and I talked in whispers. "What made you come after me at just the right second?" I asked.

"I don't know. You were gone a long time, when suddenly I got a call inside of me. It must have been Allah. You are a lucky Armenian, Artour."

"A lucky American," I corrected. "By the way, Moustafa, what was going on so secretly in the tent? Were they praying?"

"No, it was long past the hour of the last prayer."

"Then what could they be doing?" I insisted.

"Maybe they were visiting with relatives," Moustafa said with a smile.

"Male or female?"

Moustafa looked at me strangely. "Male."

Through the barred window we could see the first light of dawn. We moved the furniture away from the door, opened it, and Moustafa stole out. He returned with Arab bread, which is delicious when fresh, but like plastic when it is not, and a large plate of ground chickpeas.

"After we eat, we leave," Captain Zaki said. "If we don't go now, there'll be blood in the streets. We didn't come here to fight Arabs."

"We will take a train to Rafa," Moustafa said. Rafa was the

last town on the Egyptian side of the Palestine border. From there we would cross the border to Beersheba and then trust to luck to reach Jerusalem.

We finished in silence. The boys packed their things.

“Yallah!”

Quickly and silently we slipped out, circled the tent jammed with Followers of Truth, and in hushed single file walked past the mud-built houses. Dawn had come in full glory. Life began to stir about us; rickety shutters flew open, squeaking on their hinges. Women splattered the streets with the contents of bcdpans, keeping the dust down at the same time. Donkeys and children had already littered the streets. We looked behind. A squad of Followers of Truth were lurking in our rear. They grew in numbers as we walked quickly, close to the walls—where in a way, it was safer, though unclean. Soon we lost ourselves in Ismailia.

“We are now going to visit a rich Moslem and ask for money for train tickets.” Zaki said. “We want you to come with us. Maybe he will like to have his picture taken.”

We went to an expensively furnished home. Our host, a portly Arab, eyed us all with suspicion. He wanted to know what the lone American was doing. Perhaps I was a foreign agent! Oh, no, Moustafa assured him. I was Exhibit A—an American who hated the Jews so much that he had come 5,500 miles to fight them. I was also a wonderful photographer. The wealthy Arab wasn’t impressed. He had been solicited before, and was cautious with his money. Ultimately, he proved to be a member of the Ikhwan, with no love for the Green Shirts. He offered us fine Arab coffee. Otherwise, our mission was a failure.

“We will have to pay for the tickets ourselves,” Zaki said.

Late in the afternoon we took the train for El Qantara, the Suez Canal terminal for trains to Palestine. It was night when we arrived. Moustafa made us wait while he went to the customs office to fix matters. I had explained that I could not hope to pass with my cameras because I had not been asked

to declare them when I first arrived in Egypt. I had also told Moustafa that owing to our delay in Ismailia, my Egyptian visa had expired. Normally, both were grave offenses.

“Don’t worry about anything,” Moustafa said.

To my astonishment, the usually bureaucratic Egyptian custom officials chalked my bags without opening them. With Moustafa again supervising, my passport was stamped, and I was through. Getting on the train became a real problem. It was packed tighter than a New York subway at rush hour. The door was impossible to open, so Moustafa and I scrambled in through the windows. The other Green Shirts scattered to other cars. Captain Zaki, being large and plump, found the window too tight for his girth. He had worked his way through to his hips—and then he was stuck. The train whistle blew for the third time. The train lurched forward: with might and main we pushed the captain out, then desperately Moustafa and I began to remove baggage from the doorway, throwing it in every direction, with no heed to the shouting owners. When Zaki finally leaped aboard, the train was already past the platform.

#### “FORGET YOU ARE AMERICAN”

I WAS standing chest-high in baggage. I had long lost trace of my own. The three of us stood together now amid the infuriated passengers who were screaming for their luggage. We had landed in a third-class compartment. There was no light. As soon as the train got beyond the town, we were in pitch-black darkness. My flashlight was a life-saver. Gradually everyone found his belongings, barricaded himself behind them, and a semblance of quiet was restored. Our companions were a farmer, two soldiers, a Palestinian policeman, a boy sleeping on baggage, and two women—veiled despite the midnight blackness—squatting beside half a dozen baskets filled with

vegetables and personal belongings. As luck would have it, I was seated between a basket filled with dried garlic done up in braids and a basket of reeking scallions. Caught between these stenches, I stuck my nose in a corner of the window. After several hours of this, the fresh air made me so hungry—we hadn't had supper—that I asked Moustafa for some of the food we carried.

"Sabri has it. But wait, Artour, we'll get food someplace."

Moustafa's neighbor was the Palestinian policeman, wearing the *kalpak*, black woolen headpiece. Moustafa engaged him in conversation. As he talked I could see by the movement of his glowing cigarette tip that the Palestinian was repeatedly turning in my direction. He was so touched by the richly embellished story of an American travelling 5,500 miles to fight the *Jehad* side by side with the Arabs' own Holy Warriors, that Moustafa turned to me:

"He wants to see your beautiful face. Give me your flashlight."

By this time, everybody for several layers around had heard the wondrous tale of the brave and noble American who had been living with the Arabs and was going to war with them, so that when Moustafa directed the light on my face, I found myself the center of attention.

"Allah, Allah." These were sighs of satisfaction.

"But he looks Arab," the Palestinian said. "He must be a brother Moslem."

"Perhaps we shall make him one soon," Moustafa said suggestively, eying the policeman's basket of food.

"*Insh'allah! Insh'allah!*"

There was no difficulty after that. My flashlight revealed four loaves of bread, olives, white cheese, *halvah*, and oranges. The woman with the scallions made a generous contribution to our supper. Raw onions, and scallions in particular, have always caused me distress. But to refuse food offered by an Arab is tantamount to an insult, especially when done by an American. I managed the ordeal somehow, proffering my

thanks to the woman and the policeman. In the name of Allah, I wished them a full larder. "May you never taste of hunger to the end of your days," I said through Moustafa. "*Sufra daimeh memnoun*. May your table always be full, thank you."

The train rumbled on with a slow, rhythmic beat. The sky was clear, and the stars were out in their full splendor. We had eaten, and now we rested. Quiet had settled over the car, broken only by snoring, and the endless coughing of the aged. Someone closed the windows because it was growing cold; moreover, the Arab prefers to sleep in a warm, air-tight room. The odor of garlic and scallions, thus kept pure from any contamination by fresh air, reached full flower. My nostrils stung and my eyes watered. I decided to imitate the Arabs. I stopped resisting. "It must be kismet," I said resignedly. Resting my head against my knapsack, my nose no more than ten inches from the nearest bouquet of scallions, I asphyxiated myself to sleep.

The sun was just breaking over a horizon of bleak sand dunes when our train pulled into Rafa on the frontier separating Egypt from Palestine. In ancient days Rafa was a Byzantine bishopric. Now it was a shambles of native homes. It was also a rendezvous for narcotic wholesalers. Hasheesh smugglers, after crossing Palestine, often met here. Those smuggling the drug by motorboat made their delivery on the coast near by. Moustafa warned me that the railway station swarmed with British and Egyptian government agents. Passengers were usually screened, their baggage rechecked, and passports reinspected.

"I will carry your bag as my own," Captain Zaki said. He was now dressed in the official uniform of an Egyptian army captain. "Keep the *khaffiya* on your head. Remember, speak to no one!"

My heart pounded as I waited. But with my full-grown mustache, deep tan, wrinkled khaki, I looked as Arab as anyone on the train. The boys had covered their Green Shirt



armbands. As we walked on the platform they maneuvered me into the middle position so that if anyone asked questions there would be many to answer in Arabic. We trooped past a gauntlet of inspectors; one of them halted Moustafa, and asked about us. He was joined by another who made a random check of our knapsacks. He chose to dig into mine. Happily it contained nothing but clothing. He spoke to me in Arabic: Moustafa and Captain Zaki quickly volunteered the answers. The man waved us on. . . . We had passed the last Egyptian checkpoint and were free to go on to Palestine.

"He wanted to know if you have a camera," Moustafa said, when we were out of earshot. "It is forbidden in a military zone."

"From now on," Zaki added, "tell no one you are from America. *Forget you are an American!* You are an Armenian from Turkey. Speak only Armenian and Turkish to strangers."

We headed toward a shanty town on the outskirts of Rafa, to make arrangements for transportation to Beersheba, Arab headquarters at the gates of the Negev, the great southern desert of Palestine. Rafa itself had boomed in the last few months, and served as an outpost for volunteer fighters, gun-runners, and Arab refugees already fleeing from Palestine. As early as the end of March 1948, Cairo was crowded with wealthy Palestinian refugees, both Moslem and Christian, who had left their homes voluntarily, even though widespread fighting had not yet broken out. By ten o'clock Moustafa and Zaki had located a gun-running truck leaving for Beersheba.

*Yallah!* We climbed into the truck and rode until we reached the Palestine border. There we were halted by British soldiers. Two tanks stood near by. Beyond was a large British camp. The Green Shirts had now hidden their own guns and insignia, and posed as native Palestinians. The English went through the formality of asking: "Any guns on the truck?" We said: "No," laughing. The soldiers smiled back, took down our license number and, lifting the wooden barrier, let us through. We were in Palestine!

As our truck rolled on, I began to itch with more than the usual vigor. At first I thought it resulted from my desperate need of a bath. But the itch was a curious kind of an itch. This was under the arms, and on my back, and stung like tiny needles. Fleas? When the itch reached the crook of my arm, I rolled up my sleeve and easily caught the culprits—LICE! I showed them to Moustafa.

"That's nothing," he said, scratching himself. "We'll get DDT when we reach Jerusalem."

"Let's get it around here so that we can sleep tonight."

"I don't think you'll find any. Only the Jews have it." He grinned. "You have clean blood, Artour. If you didn't, the lice would not come to you."

"What do you mean?"

"Lice don't come to you if you have syphilis."

I don't know how true this is. On another occasion, while Moustafa and I were scratching fiercely, he observed: "We have fleas, Artour."

"How do you know they are fleas?" I asked.

"By the way they bite. Fleas bite different."

I never mastered the distinction, but I learned that psychologically the effect was different. Lice gave one the feeling of uncleanness, of guilt. But one laughed off fleas, perhaps because the pets we had back home usually had fleas in summer, and no stigma was attached.

But it was no disgrace to get lice in the Arab world. It was discussed as we discuss a common cold. Bedouin men and women are lice-ridden from cradle to grave. To meet a Bedouin socially and not match his scratching is, as Moustafa pointed out, a sign of uncleanness. For me it was a badge of success, for it meant that my initiation as a native was now complete.

We arrived in Beersheba as the shadows deepened in the west. Moustafa and Zaki reported immediately to the police station, where we were all cleared. After looking around for a place to sleep, we located rooms in a Moslem school, already

occupied by other volunteers. The place was comparatively clean. I washed thoroughly. Stretching out on an army cot, I spent my first peaceful night since leaving Cairo. I slept soundly, oblivious to the fierce, biting onslaughts of my newly acquired friends. It showed how much of an Arab I had become!

## (CHAPTER IX)

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### THE HOLY CITY



*"I pray to Allah to destroy the Jews. I pray to Allah to punish President Truman because he has been on the Zionist side. I used to pray against President Roosevelt, a very bad man. . . . May Balfour and Roosevelt take the first place in hell. Allah, Allah, may this be done."*

*"You sound like a Moslem Republican," I said.*

Interview with Sheikh Ismail el Ansary

BEERSHEBA marked the southernmost limits of Biblical Palestine ("from Dan to Beersheba.") Most of its two thousand inhabitants now were Bedouins, or former Bedouins turned to the comforts of town life. Within a year it was to become an almost all-Jewish town, as the Arabs fled and Jewish refugees from Europe were settled there.

Here, in this green, extremely picturesque frontier post and supply oasis we remained for a few days, to raise funds and arrange for transportation to Jerusalem, fifty miles to the north. It was a pleasant respite. The wide, dusty main street was lined with trees. Here passed coffee vendors, porters with stacks of dried skins, and innumerable bronzed Bedouins on camels. A trading and smuggling center, Beersheba trafficked in arms and hasheesh, and also boasted several rifle factories, at this moment working at top speed.

Not far from Beersheba I saw my first Jewish communal settlement, Kibbutz Beit Eshel. With its well-tended orchards and green trees, Beit Eshel rose like an oasis from the bleak, dust-packed Negev desert around it. A kibbutz was always conspicuous by its water tower, silo, and modern farm buildings, and contrasted sharply with the squalor of Arab villages.

Moustafa pointed at Beit Eshel with awe. "We have attacked it, but the Jews are well armed. They have built a Maginot Line around their place and fight you from under the ground. They are cowards." Later, I was to see astonishing examples of Jewish ingenuity—and understand exactly what Moustafa meant. "After May 15 Beit Eshel will be ours. The Egyptian army will make it one with the desert."

"*Insh'allah! Insh'allah!* With God's help," I said.

Surrounded by Arabs and desert, a lone sentry in the wilderness, I could not imagine how Beit Eshel could ever hold out against massed troops and heavy artillery.<sup>1</sup> Inquiring discreetly, I learned that the kibbutz had already taken a toll of attacking Arabs. It was supplied by a daring airlift and sometimes by food and ammunition convoys that boldly ran the gauntlet of Arab soldiers all the way from coastal Tel Aviv, seventy miles across the desert.

I don't know how our boys arranged it, but next day six of us were invited to lunch by the mayor of Beersheba. His home was clean and airy, the furniture lined stiffly against the wall and embalmed in white slipcovers. As usual, we saw no women. The dining-room table was heaped with huge platters of food. For dessert, we had *baklava*, made of tissue-thin layers of dough, baked a golden brown and saturated with nuts and syrup. Prompted by our host, we gorged ourselves for two hours. It was our most sumptuous meal since Cairo. After dinner I took a photograph of my dinner companions—fourteen assorted Arabs.

<sup>1</sup> But it did. On one occasion the settlement's armory consisted of twelve rifles and two machine-guns. The Egyptian army attacked in battalion strength with heavy artillery, and was repeatedly beaten back.

Among them was Rashad Y. Sakka, who according to his card was "Mambe of Municipl Council" of Beersheba. His English was on a par with his spelling. Sakka looked forward to the Mufti's seizure of all Palestine. "We have not a better man. He is a faithful Moslem." Sakka told me that Mr. and Mrs. Kermit Roosevelt had visited Beersheba for two days, dined with a sheikh in his tent, and had been impressed with Bedouin life.

#### THE BEDOUIN KING OF BEERSHEBA

IN THE morning of the third day Moustafa asked me to accompany him to the home of a rich Arab who might help us with money and arms. I went with him to a house built solidly of stone, with windows heavily barred, the lower half of each window latticed Turkish fashion to enable the women inside to peer out yet remain invisible to the passerby. We were halted at the iron door by a sentry. A half dozen other armed Bedouins sprawled in the courtyard. Another sentry allowed us no farther than the porch. There we waited for Sheikh Salaam, a Bedouin tribal chief. He was a short, wizened man with a face the color of burnt copper. He had tiny, cunning eyes and a tight and narrow mouth from which the words came sparingly. He was draped in a flowing black *burnous*, gold-braided at the neck. Around his waist was a cartridge belt, revolver, and a curved dagger, standard Bedouin equipment. He took Moustafa inside with him.

I learned the sheikh's record. Already wealthy through border traffic, he had bought land cheaply from Bedouins, and later sold it at extravagant prices to Jews, amassing even greater wealth. The vengeful Bedouins demanded an accounting. The sheikh promptly turned against the Jews, and emerged a top Arab patriot.

Moustafa came away empty-handed from the sheikh. "He is rich but he does not give *baksheesh*. He is not patriotic,"

Moustafa complained bitterly. "His enemies will kill him very soon."

While Moustafa had attempted to persuade the sheikh to help us, I had been browsing outside. A short, chunky young man with a military shirt and leggings sought admission and was brusquely turned away amid a vicious exchange of words. I watched from the safety of the doorway as he stood there, cursing. As he left, he saw me and said gruffly: "*Sabah il-kher*. Good morning."

"*Ussaid hel sabah min'allah*. May Allah give you a good morning."

The way I pronounced the words made him turn around. "Are you English?" he asked.

"La, no. American."

It was the beginning of a stormy friendship that was to alter the entire course of my adventures with the Arabs. The young man—Faris—was from Jerusalem. An idea came to me.

"Meet us at the schoolhouse at noon," I said. "It will be to your interest."

I told Moustafa about Faris and suggested that we ask him to take us to Jerusalem. Our boys had no money by this time; they had counted on Sheikh Azaayim for help; they were willing now to fight for anybody who would feed and arm them. Moustafa thought my idea excellent. He had a plan to enlist the support of Jerusalem Arabs once we reached the city. Captain Zaki and the boys agreed to let Moustafa go ahead and arrange matters, while they remained in Beersheba and tried to enlist local support. When Faris came at noon, we asked if he would take the two of us. He agreed.

"To Jerusalem!" Moustafa said, delighted. "*Yallah!*"

Our credentials were carefully inspected on the way out. My authorization from *Al Misri* and the letter from the Mufti's Arab Higher Committee passed the test. We took the road north. The brown scorched land all around us spoke of the barrenness of man's neglect. It was covered with outcroppings of rock and sparse thin grass as far as the eye could

reach. The telephone lines had been cut. Later I saw saboteurs at work—Arabs systematically stripping the wires for their copper content. They would melt them into bullets.

We reached Hebron, the Biblical tombstone of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, and finally Jacob. In more recent times Hebron had the dubious distinction of being the first Palestinian town whose Jews were completely exterminated by the Arabs; this massacre took place in 1929 during the Mufti-organized attacks, which he directed from Hebron. Built between two rugged hillsides, the town was a natural fortress, known for the ferociousness, brutality, and homosexuality of its inhabitants. The inspection of our papers was severe. I passed again.

The road from Hebron to Jerusalem traversed ground of hallowed antiquity. Here was the spot where, under the oak, Abraham received the three angels and where, later, David was anointed king. We passed Bethlehem, with its numerous churches, and beyond it the Well of the Magi, where the Star that they followed again appeared to the three Wise Men. We drove past the remains of an aqueduct built by Pontius Pilate. Then, as we came to Rachel's tomb, near which the Jews had built *Kibbutz Ramat Rahel*, Faris suddenly brought me to the present by commanding sharply: "Get down in the car! The Jews will shoot if you look out the window."

#### ON THE HILL OF EVIL COUNSEL

LATE in the afternoon, as the sun cast its deep shadows over the countryside, now extraordinarily lovely with its terraced fields, its freshly furrowed earth, and blossoming orchards of fig, almond, cherry, and olive trees, we reached the first Jerusalem roadblock. We drove straight to Faris's home in *Deir Aboutor*, a sector built on the lower end of a promontory called the Hill of Evil Counsel, just outside the Old City of

Jerusalem. From here the Holy City presented an indescribably beautiful and majestic panorama, breathtaking in the Biblical history it encompassed.

On the left was the Jewish-built New City, the striking and imposing tower of the Young Men's Christian Association, the luxurious King David Hotel, and clusters of rugged stone buildings. Beyond, on Biblical Mount Scopus, now kissed by the setting sun, were the classic modern buildings of the Hebrew University and the Hadassah Hospital. Far to the right I could see the mountains of Trans-Jordan rising above the depression of the Dead Sea.

Mount Zion was directly across from us. On the Mount of Olives was the stately Church of the Ascension, with the Garden of Gethsemane at its base. David's Tower, the Citadel, and the massive serrated Old City walls commanded attention in the foreground. Inside those walls, built in the shape of a crooked rectangle about a square mile in area, was the Old City of Jerusalem. From where I stood I could see the giant Dome of the Rock—the Mosque of Omar—Islam's holy shrine, built over the spot where the Prophet is supposed to have ascended to heaven. Within those Old City walls, too, were the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Golgotha, the Wailing Wall, and scores of shrines holy to three faiths, which had made Jerusalem, with its strategic position, the most fought-over city in the world for twenty centuries and more.

But this was no time for reverie. Faris took us immediately to the home of his cousin, Hashim. There we had supper, and were put up for the night. When I saw our host wearing the insignia of Ikhwan el Muslimin, I said to him: "I have met your Moorshid in Cairo. A great man, a very noble man. May Allah preserve him."

It pleased him immensely.

I found Deir Aboutor bristling with artillery, most of it hidden for future use, for at this moment—a month and more before the British mandate was to end—it was illegal to possess arms, let alone fire them, although thousands, both Arab

and Jew, were doing so. Deir Aboutor was the central Arab headquarters outside the Old City of Jerusalem. More than two hundred soldiers were living here in the homes of Arabs who had fled.

Early the next morning Moustafa and I took a bus for the Old City, which was held by the Arabs. One could walk the distance, but it meant passing the Jewish Yemin Moshe section outside the city walls. The Arabs had blown up many of its houses and the Haganah forces, in retaliation, blasted away at Arab trucks passing over the roads it commanded. Buses and taxis, however, were not molested. Buses were armor-plated, with tiny pephholes for windows. The armor was more psychological than practical, because a bullet fired at a hundred yards could easily penetrate it. To my surprise, Arabs here not only respected but feared Jewish fighters—a far cry from the bravado I had met in Egypt.

We entered the Old City through Jaffa Gate—one of the seven entrances cut into the great rectangular wall. Moustafa took me directly to the offices of the Arab Higher Committee, where I received an identity card. Then, through twisting cobblestone alleys that passed for streets, lined with bazaars and tiny cubbyhole workshops, threading our way among peddlers, donkeys, bootblacks, children, natives, walking over the waste and refuse of centuries littering the Via Dolorosa—the road that Jesus traveled on the way to Golgotha—we reached Raudat el Maaref. This, a former police station, was now Arab military headquarters in the Old City. How strangely Biblical history repeated itself, I thought. On this very site Pontius Pilate had made his headquarters 1,900 years ago. It was to this spot that Christ was brought in chains before the Roman governor. This was the first of fourteen stations of the Way of the Cross. A few dozen yards away He was scourged.

All this was of absorbing interest to me as a Christian from America, but the filth, the cold commercialism, of the Old City merchants tarnished the aura of holiness that I had attached to the Holy City. One could buy hand-grenades, bul-

lets, pistols, rifles, and even larger arms within shadow of Christendom's holiest shrine, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Lecherous guides certainly inspired no Christian sentiment. Except for isolated spots holy to Christendom, reverentially kept, and truly inspiring to visit, such as the churches, monasteries, hospices, and mission houses (as well as the centers revered by the Jews), the Old City was basically Islamic in culture, mode of living, and psychology.

These were my first impressions as Moustafa and I were ushered into the presence of Captain Fadhil Rashid Bey, Arab military commander of Jerusalem. He was soft-spoken in contrast to the braggarts I had met so far. An Iraqi, he had been trained by Germans and, as he told me, had participated in the pro-Nazi revolt of 1941 in Iraq, which for two desperate months threatened to turn the entire Middle East into a Nazi camp.<sup>2</sup> Moustafa gave me a flattering introduction as a correspondent and a German sympathizer, so that Rashid Bey and I got along famously from the outset. I took his photograph and he was pleased. I asked him deferentially how well he knew the Mufti.

"I am commander of Jerusalem because of the Mufti. I knew him in Iraq."

#### RUFFIANS ALL

RASHID BEY'S job was not enviable. He had no regular army, but a vast rabble of largely unemployed, impoverished, loot-hungry Arab hooligans, whom even the respectable Moslems feared and avoided. There was no dearth of experienced fighters. Many were veterans of the Mufti's 1929 and 1936-9 revolts. Some had spent the war years in Germany, had been thoroughly indoctrinated, and were now excellent propagandists. Others had served in the Axis-sponsored Moslem Le-

<sup>2</sup> The story is told in Chapter XXII.

gions organized under the Mufti's guidance. There was also the Mufti's Youth Corps—Futuwa—reorganized by Jamal Bey el Husseini, the Mufti's cousin and chairman of the Arab Higher Committee. There were, too, a strong representation of Ikhwan el Muslimin thugs, select ruffians from Hebron, and thousands of other shiftless, semiliterate marauders. They were undisciplined and outlaw fighters all, inept at teamwork, but dangerous when fighting individually or in small bands as guerrillas, with loot—in any form—as the primary objective.

These were the Arab gangs that, with the aid of technically skilled deserters from the British army, in recent months had blown up the *Palestine Post* and the Jewish Agency Building, bombed Ben Yehuda street, the principal Jewish business thoroughfare, and laid mines. As I strolled about I could see that they were in an extremely cocky and festive mood. They had made this last week in March a black week for the Jews. With foolhardy courage, the Haganah had sent a large convoy to supply Kfar Etzion—a chain of four *kibbutzim*—perched on a strategic hilltop commanding the road to Jerusalem from the South. The convoy had successfully charged through a fifteen mile gauntlet of Arab villages and numerous roadblocks, mines, and snipers' posts.

On its way back, however, the story was different. The Jews met Arabs under Abdul Kader el Husseini, a relative of the Mufti, who had served him in the Iraq-Nazi revolt and was now commander of Arab forces in the Jerusalem area. At Nebi Daniel (site of a small Arab village named for the prophet Daniel) huge roadblocks halted the returning convoy. A fierce battle began. Cornered, the Haganah commander regrouped his vehicles on three sides of a square, with a ruined wall forming the fourth side. The battle raged for thirty-six hours between some two hundred Jews and more than three thousand Arabs who had surrounded them and cut them off from all help.

British forces were still responsible for "law and order." They were in Palestine to prevent precisely such battles as

this. But when the British finally intervened, it was to strike a bargain with the Arabs. In return for the safety of the surviving Jews, the Arabs were to take all the Haganah arms and equipment. To prolong a hopeless struggle against odds of fifteen to one would have meant the eventual destruction of the Jewish fighting force as well as the loss of vehicles. The Haganah commander capitulated. The English escorted his men to Jerusalem. To the Jews it meant the loss of almost their entire fleet of armored trucks in Jerusalem. They also lost twelve men. The Arab toll in this "Battle of the Roads" was 135 dead.

The next day on sale everywhere in the Holy City were gruesome photographs of the battle: the burnt and mutilated bodies of Haganah men, which for some perverse Arab reason, had been stripped of clothing and photographed in the nude. These naked shots hit "Holy" City markets afresh after every battle, and sold rapidly. Arabs carried them in their wallets and displayed them frequently, getting the same weird, abnormal "kick" that our perverts derive from nude photographs of women.

After our first night at the home of Faris's cousin, we moved to our permanent headquarters near by on Deir Aboutor. This was a two-storied house that according to the stationery I found there was once the "Todd Osborne House." It had served as the "Mission to Mediterranean Garrisons, S. F. Couples, Superintendent." On my third day in Jerusalem I risked crossing to the Jewish side—the Jews were in control of most of the New City—to reach the YMCA for a night's rest and a hot shower such as I hadn't enjoyed since London. There was another urgent reason: the lice had multiplied and the itching had become unbearable. I had no means to delouse my clothing. I had no place to take a bath. The only antidote was DDT—obtainable only on the Jewish side.

Crossing from one side to the other was dangerous, though the distance was only about five hundred yards. Trigger-happy

snipers shot at any figure seen crossing the lines, on the theory that the Jews should stay on the Jewish side and Arabs on the Arab side. I found a way that I thought minimized the risk of being sniped at from the front as well as from the back. My route led under barbed wire past the railway station, up a deserted, rubble-strewn street, past several houses that looked deserted but may not have been, through two British check-posts, and across an open space particularly susceptible to Arab snipers. I negotiated the turns and twists without mishap. When I reached the YMCA I found it magnificent—with swimming pool, library, game rooms, restaurant, athletic field, and beautifully landscaped grounds. After a fine American supper and an ecstatic hot shower I used DDT liberally. I spent the night in the tiny but comfortable cell that characterized the "Y" from Joliet, Illinois, to Japan.

The next day, when I returned to the Arab side, came reckoning. I had never seen Moustafa so cross. "Where were you last night?" he asked in a surly voice. I told him the truth.

"I understand you, but they don't know you here as I do. They think I have brought a spy. I have done my best to explain that you are willing to die with us because you hate the Jew. They trust my word, even if they don't trust you. Now promise, Artour, you will never go to the YMCA again. If you do, it will be the last time. I shall not be responsible for what the fanatics do to you. . . . By the way, lend me some of your DDT."

I had brought two packages. "This box is for you, Moustafa."

The next morning I asked how he had slept.

"Bless the beard of the American who invented DDT. When you meet him, tell him that I will praise his memory forever," Moustafa said gratefully.

Despite his warning, though I spent most of the day with the Arabs, I continued to sleep at the YMCA, sneaking over to the Jewish side toward dusk, when danger from snipers was

greatest, but chances of detection were least. I had no other decent place to sleep. At the Osborne House the boys slept on lice-ridden mats on a filthy floor, and ate a monotonous diet of olives, onions, cheese, and dried bread. I had had enough of native life—at least for a while—and once I'd tasted the luxury of the YMCA I could not withstand the prospect of an appetizing hot meal, a hot shower, and a breakfast of bacon, eggs, and coffee. But to appease Moustafa and Faris, I ate lunch with the boys, helped clean the place, and told Moustafa that friends in the Armenian quarter in the Old City insisted I sleep with them.

"After all, Moustafa," I said, "are these not my people, of my faith? I have enjoyed your hospitality for many weeks. Let me now enjoy the call of blood before the big fighting begins. Who knows what Allah will have in store for me by then?"

My double life had other complications. To the half dozen Arab credentials I carried I added a green card from Deir Aboutor headquarters stating that I was with the Moustafa el Wakil Battalion<sup>3</sup> of the Green Shirts, and that my "friendship to the Arabs has been confirmed on every occasion." Another card was from the British Public Information Office, press headquarters of the Palestine Mandate Government. In addition, it was necessary to obtain permits to enter the various zones into which Jerusalem had been divided by the British. Later, on May 14, when the Jews took over the Public Information Office upon the departure of the British, I added a Jewish press pass, and hid my formidable Arabic collection.

In order not to confuse matters, I kept each set in a different pocket. The scheme worked well except that sometimes in hurry or excitement I forgot which pocket contained which, and more than once at the wrong time was on the point of pulling forth a batch of credentials that would have promptly settled my undercover activities in a fashion I don't care to

<sup>3</sup> Named after a Green Shirt hero who participated in the pro-Nazi revolt in Iraq, and later escaped to Germany where he died during the war. The Green Shirts now regard this Mufti aide and Nazi collaborator as a "saint."

think about even now. I was always sure, however, of my American passport. As I had the least use for it, I kept it in my hip pocket.

#### ARAB BATTLE, ARAB FUNERAL

ON APRIL 8, the morning before my birthday, I returned from a night at the "Y," to find Osborne House deserted and all the boys gone. A terrific battle for the past five days had been raging for Mount Castel. This was the ruins of an ancient Roman fortress commanding the road over which supplies from Tel Aviv would come to Jerusalem, and therefore was of major importance to both Jews and Arabs. The Jews had just launched a major offensive against it, and every available Arab had been rushed to its defense. Arab boasting had not been in vain: they had bottled up the New City, and cut it off from the rest of Palestine. The New City's plight was desperate. With a population of nearly one hundred thousand to feed and defend, it was woefully short of arms, ammunition, water, food, medicine, and armored transport. Its water was pumped from a station at Latrun, in Arab territory, but the Arabs had destroyed the machinery. Huge convoys waited in Tel Aviv, 45 miles away, ready to pour into the beleaguered city with food, water, and matériel—if the Jews could win back Castel. The Arabs were determined that they should not.

On this morning Abdul Kader el Hussini led his men, flushed with their victory over the Jewish convoy at Nebi Daniel, against the fortress of Castel; a whooping, colorful counterattack, a mass charge of 2,500 frenzied Holy Warriors, including the Deir Aboutor gang. When I found no one in Osborne House, I went down to the Old City; and I was there when suddenly everyone began to yell frantically. I thought that a prominent Jew had been caught and was about to be hanged in public. I dared not ask, as I was alone. Then, to my



horror, soldiers and civilians alike began to discharge their pistols and rifles indiscriminately. Sharpshooters on the walls took up the racket. I sought refuge in a doorway. I was convinced this was no hanging party, but good news of some sort, which the Arabs were celebrating in their own peculiar way. It was like our Fourth of July—except that live ammunition was going off in all directions. What was the good news? I stopped a policeman. "Castel! It is ours!" he screamed, and fired his pistol, splitting my eardrums.

Moustafa, Faris, and the others returned to Deir Aboutor late in the afternoon, grimy but exalted. I listened to their tales of triumph. One would think these two alone had captured Castel. Mohammed, one of the fighters, had a wrist watch and field glasses he did not have the day before.

"Where did you get them?"

"From the Jews."

"You told me once that Arabs buried dead Jews with their rings and watches."

Everybody laughed. . . . Toward evening they were laughing no longer, but on the contrary were as glum as if their mothers had died. The Castel victory had been costly. Abdul Kader el Husseini, hero of the counterattack, and the only man with a personal following in the Jerusalem area, had been killed in the action. There was no one else to take his place. The funeral would be held tomorrow morning.

I spent my birthday witnessing that extraordinary spectacle.

I wore my Mufti button showing the Mufti's turbaned head against a background of red, black, and green—the Arab colors. Arab tempers were on edge. An angered mob could be dangerous to strangers. I stuck close to Moustafa, and asked him to delegate two of the boys to keep an eye on me. I sensed the tenseness as Moustafa and a half dozen of us walked through the Old City to the Moslem quarter, where the dead chief's bier rested in his home. The crowd was heavily armed, and so thick that there was hardly elbow room. Not a single woman was visible.

We followed the mourners, walking in silence. When the crowd turned a corner to Husseini's house, I climbed aboard an armored car to take pictures. At that moment a volley of rifle shots suddenly crackled into the air. I heard shouts: "Yahood! Yahood!" Mourning gave way to panic, as practically every Arab in the teeming mob of thousands simultaneously let go with pistol or rifle. The bullets hit live electric wires, which broke and swung on the road as Arabs tried to scramble out of their way. My position atop the car was, to say the least, highly untenable. I remember now that a bullet whistled past just as I jumped, crawling on all fours toward a space between two cars. Everyone was scrambling for safety. Within sixty seconds, the streets were completely cleared. Arabs were flat against anything that was handy: earth, streets, doors, walls. Some were still jumping over fences. It was all very undignified for a people who claimed that if they chose to spit, they could drown the Jews. Crouching between two cars, I managed to take a few pictures. Under each car were three Arabs, with others trying to crawl under. Of all the bizarre scenes I saw in the Arab world, perhaps this one of utter panic, hysteria, and fear was the most comic—and significant.

What we had all thought was a Haganah attack turned out to be a rifle salute in honor of the dead commander. When they began shouting this intelligence, I saw Moustafa crawling from under the armored car, dusting himself with an air of embarrassment. I showed him my scraped shinbone.

As the funeral cortege came around the bend I lost Moustafa. The boys assigned to guard me had bravely disappeared during the melee. I was alone. Fortunately, when I got on a high wall to shoot pictures, I met two Armenian boys. They accompanied me as we followed the cortege. Husseini's coffin, covered with a red, black, and green flag, was carried to the square below the Dome of the Rock, where Arab chiefs spoke their eulogies. All this took place within sight of the Wailing Wall. The bier was then lifted by the pallbearers and the final

procession began. Passing under banners of Arab flags, and waved on by palm leaves, the coffin was borne slowly away.

I was now before the entrance of the Dome of the Rock, one of Islam's holiest shrines. Standing near by was a short, plump, round-faced man with a magnificent spade-shaped white beard and an enormous white turban, who was the custodian, Sheikh Ismail el Ansary. I asked in Turkish if I might enter and pay my respects to the Prophet. Fingering his beads, he led me into the octagonal, exquisitely ornate mosque that had been built by Byzantine artists on the model of the Church of the Ascension. In the half-light of latticed and stained-glass windows, I saw magnificently tinted columns that had once graced the Temple of Jerusalem in Roman times. Others were from Christian churches of the Byzantine era, as attested to by signs of the Cross.

Directly under the enormous dome, enclosed within a high fence, was a huge black slab of rock, glowing darkly as it reflected the subdued rays streaming through the stained glass. It was to this rock that Mohammed was supposed to have arrived in one day from Mecca—hundreds of miles away—by flying on his winged horse, El Burak. It is said that he prayed on this rock, then, mounting the steed, flew to heaven. Historically the rock was actually a jagged slice of Mount Moriah, the hill on which Abraham offered to sacrifice Isaac. The Jews prayed on it long before the Moslem dome covered it.

Solomon built his magnificent Temple here and housed in it the Jewish holy of holies, the Ark of the Covenant. The entire area of the mosque, and the spacious stone courtyard surrounding it, were built on the site of the ancient Israel courts, where Christ preached and drove away the money-changers. Hardly a square inch here was without some direct connection to ancient Hebraic or Christian history.

None of these Hebraic-Christian origins, however, could be mentioned to Sheikh Ansary. He disliked Americans for their support of the partition of Palestine, but he apparently

thought me sufficiently "un-American" to invite me to his room after my visit to the Dome. It was a large igloo-like stone guardhouse, next to one of the porticos. Sitting on a colorful settee, he offered me the choice of bitter Arab coffee or sweetened tea.

After I had gained his confidence, El Ansary proved unusually outspoken. "Look here"—these were the only English words he knew—"whenever I pray, I pray to Allah to destroy the Jews. I pray to Allah to punish President Truman because he has been on the Zionist side. I used to pray against President Roosevelt, a very bad man. Now I pray to Allah that he destroy Mrs. Roosevelt because she is behaving very badly toward the Arabs."

"You sound like a Moslem Republican," I said.

"Look here, I pray against them for different reasons. Against Balfour and his family I pray that Allah confine them all to hell. The English are like *sarratan* [cancer]. May Balfour and Roosevelt take first place in hell. Allah, Allah, may this be done."

Propriety demanded that I say: "*Insh'allah*."

Despite his sixty-eight years, the man was as vigorous as an ox. "Look here, I will fight for Palestine to the last minute of my life," he said, with eyes blazing. "No Moslem is afraid of death. If he dies for Palestine that is a satisfying way to die. His parents are happy he fell in the *Jihad*. If we cannot win any other way, all the sheikhs in all the mosques in all the Arab countries over all the world will climb the minarets, and call on every Moslem to join the *Jihad* against the Jew in Palestine."

I turned the conversation to the Mufti.

"Look here," said El Ansary, "he is of the same blood as Mohammed. He is respected for his many good deeds. I pray for the Mufti in all my prayers to Allah."

I thanked Sheikh el Ansary for his courtesy and, according to decorum, wished him long life and the blessings of Allah on him, his family, and his heirs. Bowing, I salaamed by plac-

ing my fingertips first to my heart, then to my lips, my forehead. He did the same in token of his respect toward me. "I shall remember you in my prayers to Allah," he said.

### UNHOLY CITY

LATE in the afternoon I met Moustafa in Deir Aboutor. He was glum.

"What's the matter?"

"Castel. The Jews got Castel back early this morning," Moustafa said.

Overnight the fortunes of war had changed. With the capture of Castel the Jews had opened the road to Tel Aviv, and hundreds of convoys poured into Jerusalem with sorely needed food, medical supplies, and arms. The Arabs later recaptured Castel, but that brief respite helped Jerusalem immensely in this period.

"What are we going to do now, Moustafa?"

"Faris and I are going back to Cairo to buy heavy guns. We need them badly."

I thought quickly. I would prefer to remain in Jerusalem and wait for Moustafa and Faris to return. But the idea of running guns from Egypt to Palestine excited and challenged me. Where were the Arabs getting their guns? Who was supplying them? How would they smuggle them into Palestine? And what role was the Mufti—in Cairo—playing? I wanted desperately to meet him. . . . I spoke up:

"I'll come along. Remember our pledge: wherever you go, I follow."

It took several days for Faris to borrow capital to pay for the guns he expected to buy, and to make other arrangements. In the meantime Captain Zaki and the other Green Shirts we had left in Beersheba had managed to hitch-hike to Deir

### *The Holy City*

Aboutor and join us. Zaki was placed in charge of Osborne House while we prepared to leave for Cairo.

But before we left Jerusalem two outrages—one Jewish, the other Arab—shocked the conscience of every decent Jew, Christian, and Moslem. The first occurred at Deir Yassin a small Arab village on the outskirts of Jerusalem. For years the Arabs there had lived at peace with the Jews. Then suddenly the Arabs began to snipe and stage vicious attacks on isolated Jewish settlements. After several warnings the Stern group told the Arabs to evacuate their women and children because it intended to retaliate in kind. The Arabs refused, counting on the presence of women and children to prevent the Jews from attacking. The Sternists, in turn, believing the families had been evacuated, staged an all-out attack, determined to silence those Arabs who had been massacring Jews for weeks.

When the Arabs put up stiff resistance, the Sternists called in the Irgun, whereupon the Arab warriors fled. In the melee, the innocent suffered: the women, the children, the aged. The slaughter reached a toll of 150. Bodies were piled on street corners. Others were thrown into wells. Despite the heat of war, the massacre was as senseless as it was hideous. Every Jew I met was horrified and ashamed. The fact that this was the only instance of its kind in the history of Jewish-Arab relations, or that the Arab leaders of Deir Yassin had been warned to evacuate their women and children, does not excuse its vindictiveness.

The dark gods that guided the destinies of the Holy City took quick revenge. On April 13 a convoy of nurses, doctors, medical students and scholars set out for the Hebrew University and the Hadassah Hospital on Mount Scopus, above Jerusalem. The British had been duly informed of the non-military nature of the convoy, and the Jews had requested their protection. But instead of the British, the Arabs came—hundreds of veterans of Nebi Daniel and Mount Castel. First they set up roadblocks, then they knocked out the first in the

convoy of four armored buses. For seven hours the Arabs battered the helpless victims with grenades, Bren guns, Molotov cocktails. They set two cars on fire, shooting down those who crawled out. Among the seventy-seven who perished were men eminent in Palestine science: Dr. Chaim Yasky, director of the Hadassah Hospital; Dr. Mizurky, cancer specialist; Dr. Benjamin Klar, philologist; Dr. Abraham Freimann, authority on Jewish law; Doljansky and Ben-David of the Faculty of Medicine, who had treated many Arabs.

British police watched as the slaughter went on. When it was nearly over, they laid down a smoke screen, drove off the Arabs, and arranged for a truce. Then they carried off the survivors—28 out of 105!

Later, the Arabs disclosed that they had been falsely informed of “large concentrations of Jewish bands gathering near the Hospital and University.” Who had informed them? I heard the answer everywhere among the Arabs at Deir Aboutor:

“*El Ingleez!*” The English!

Whether Arab massacred Jew, or Jew massacred Arab, was of little moment. I felt that neither the Jew nor the Moslem was basically at fault here. They were victims of a conspiracy beyond their scope, and at this stage, their inflamed passions made a peaceful ending impossible. Neither Arabs nor Jews, but pagans, had made the Holy City impure and unholy—a city whose revered memory was blasphemed most by those making the greatest pretense to piety and democracy.

The next day I left with Moustafa and Faris for Cairo.

## (CHAPTER X)

### GUN-RUNNING!



*“Eighteen pounds,” the gun merchant said, expecting to get fifteen.*

*“That is cheap,” Faris whispered. “Buy it.”*

*“Ten pounds,” I offered.*

*“Sixteen and it is yours.”*

*“Ten,” I said.*

*“It cost me fifteen, I swear by Allah.”*

*“It’s worth no more than ten pounds,” I insisted, and made a move to leave.*

*I finally bought it for eleven pounds.*

IT WAS no joy ride. The distance from Jerusalem to Cairo was about three hundred miles, the greater part of it over desert. Our transportation on the first leg of our journey was a hired open truck with rickety sidings, filled with ten large drums of gasoline and six crates of oranges, which Faris proposed to sell in Beersheba to get additional money for guns. All the drums leaked and the floor of the truck was already drenched when I clambered on board. I didn’t think gas-soaked oranges would taste good, but it was none of my business.

I was dressed appropriately: my khaffiya about my face, my Green Shirt armband in place, my Arab credentials carefully placed where I could get at them quickly. My job was to sit

in the back and watch the drums. Moustafa and Faris sat in front with the driver, guns poised against snipers and hold-up men. Gasoline was scarce and the cargo valuable. We were particularly jittery as we approached the Jewish settlement near Rachel's tomb, *Kibbutz Ramat Rachel*. Our truck stopped, and Moustafa, to guard against attack from Jewish snipers, climbed with his machine-gun into the back with me. Then our truck made a frenzied dash, madly careening and zigzagging from one side of the road to the other to spoil the aim of sharpshooters. The drums slammed and bounced together with a frightful racket, causing them to leak all the more. One of them nearly pinned me to the side and another almost smashed my hand as I tried to keep them together. I gave up finally and held on to the sidings, never sure whether I'd be ripped off with them at the next turn. I could see it was going to be an exciting ride back to Cairo.

We roared by the *kibbutz* in a cloud of dust. No snipers shot at us.

"You are brave, like a soldier," Moustafa said, as we slowed down at a safe distance and he climbed back into the front seat.

We stopped to pick up hitch-hikers. Later on, we picked up more, ragged ruffians all. Now I had the added responsibility of keeping Arabs from pilfering oranges. It was not an easy task to instruct loot-mad cutthroats on the proprieties of ownership. Suddenly I caught one of them smoking a cigarette, seated atop the leaking gasoline drums. He had smoked it more than halfway before I saw what he was doing. If I were an Arab I'd have struck him.

I grabbed the cigarette out of his mouth and tossed it into the road.

"*Ahba! Ahba! Fool!*" I yelled over and over. The moron shrugged his shoulders.

We passed Bethlehem and neared *Kibbutz Kfar Etzion* with about twenty gas-splattered hitch-hikers perched like

buzzards all over the truck. That it held together was a tribute to the genius of its American maker. Five hundred yards from *Kfar Etzion* we halted again: tracer bullets from the Jews would have blown us all sky high. We waited for an armored car to come along and act as military escort for us until we passed the Jewish settlement. Presently one came roaring behind us. We let it go ahead and followed close behind. Beyond the settlement the road sloped. Down the hill we now dashed in a mad, suicidal flight at some seventy miles an hour. I wondered which would be easier—crashing or roasting to death. To my surprise we ran this gauntlet, too, without a shot. To my greater surprise, the truck still held together. I thought the Jews were asleep at *Kfar Etzion*, but I soon learned they were holding their fire for bigger game.

Just as we reached the bottom of the grade, we met a large convoy led by four armed trucks bristling with King Abdullah's British-trained, British-financed Arab Legionnaires. They were followed by a dozen mammoth trucks, carrying thousands of gallons of gasoline in tins. A half dozen trucks filled with more Legion troops brought up the rear.

We met the convoy a minute after running the Jewish gauntlet. As the armored trucks reached the hilltop we had just left, the Jews opened with a barrage. Watching the battle from a safe distance, I realized suddenly that our truck had missed being caught in the line of fire, let alone risking a head-on smashup on the narrow road, by a matter of seconds!

As the Jews began to fire, the convoy stopped, and the armored cars began firing. With a display of excellent discipline and marksmanship, the Arab Legion scored four hits on the Jewish stronghold. *Kfar Etzion* guns were silenced in clouds of dust, smoke, and debris. The fight was over in a half hour and the convoy resumed its journey. I saw one Arab vehicle smoking. Three Arabs were reported dead. While the fighting was going on, Moustafa and I ran over freshly plowed fields to get a closer view. But we dared move only when we

saw a protecting rockpile or fence. By the time we arrived, the convoy was well on its way. We hailed a small armored car to drive us back to our truck.

As Moustafa scrambled into the car, I barely squeezed in after him. I found myself sitting on what I presumed was someone's leg. When I turned to beg his pardon, I found the man dead. He was an Arab Legionnaire propped up against a tire. At first I saw only his arm. Then I saw that he had been shot through the left temple, and the blood had clotted over his face and eyeball. His mouth was partly open, but I could see no teeth. A small white bandage, thrown over his head, had become saturated with his blood. The pallor of death had already set in. I looked around. Exactly thirteen of us were jammed tightly inside the sweating interior of the car. To my right was a veiled woman. Her hands were bloody and she was weeping.

"Was he your son?" I asked in broken Arabic.

"La, no," she said, and indicated that she had bloodied her hands helping him into the truck.

The Legionnaire was the first dead man I had ever touched. The soldier's legs wobbled grotesquely against mine, and the horribly mutilated face stared vacantly in the hot, cramped confines of the armored car. We reached Faris, who was waiting for us in our truck.

We continued south, toward the Negev, driving across lands now waste, but which could easily bloom—not by *insh'allah*, or by agricultural methods pre-dating Mohammed—but by toil, by planning, by science, by water. We passed small herds of bearded black goats tended by young boys in rags. We came to what I thought at first was a rubble heap. It turned out to be a native mud village. Hordes of children swarmed across our path, followed by mangy dogs. Once again we passed the telephone lines, stripped of copper, swinging pathetically in the hot wind.

## TWO ARMENIANS IN THE NEGEV

WE ARRIVED in Beersheba in the afternoon, exhausted, dusty, and smelly. Faris, good as his promise, promptly sold the oranges and the gasoline at a good profit and added the money to his gun fund. The hired truck went back to Jerusalem. For lunch we were again invited by the mayor for a meal of *pilav* and lamb. Sitting at my right was a gray-haired man with a worried face. His features, tempered by suffering, were not Arabic, though he was dark-skinned and unshaven. We had been talking in Turkish. The man ate with unusual gusto.

"He eats almost like a starving Armenian," I said to myself. Something in me clicked. . . . I looked again at his face, especially the eyes.

"Hyc yes? Are you Armenian?" I asked.

The man almost choked. He stared at me in my *khaffiya*, my armband, my deeply tanned face, and gasped:

"Toun Hye yes? Are you Armenian?"

I laughed. "Ayo. Dzo hoss *inch guness gor*? Yes. What are you doing here?"

"Yev toun *inch guness gor ass anabadin metch*? And what are you doing in this desert?"

His name was Iskender Demirjian and he was a miller. For fourteen years he had ground grain for Bedouins. A refugee from the Turkish massacres, he had lived in Jerusalem, and saved his money. Seeing that Arab women still ground their wheat by methods older than Mohammed, the enterprising Armenian had built a mill, installed the machinery, and was earning a good living. His mill was out in the parched desert, at a Bedouin crossroads. Now he was in town to buy gasoline and was going back in the afternoon.

"Moustafa, meet another good Arab, an Armenian. He will give us a ride."

"Ah, an Armenian—bravest of brave he-men, boldest of

the bold, generous to a friend, merciless to a foe. They shall always have a place of honor at my table.”

If you gave Moustafa something—anything to eat, to drink, to wear, he sang your praises like a poet. I would treat him to dinner just to hear him perorate on my people. Most Arabs are poetic. The language has nuances of grace and beauty, and powers of expression beside which English is stiff, stilted, bony, and barren.

The Armenian did not have his own truck. Someone was driving him back with three drums of gasoline the Armenian had bought and sacks of grain for milling. We hopped on, preferring to sit tête-à-tête on the grain sacks, instead of up front.

The Negev stretched around us like an undulating desert sea. The Armenian began to talk, not of chit-chat, or about wanting to come to America, but of what he had long kept pent up.

“What a strange and stubborn people we are,” he began. “How many thousands of years old we are I do not know.<sup>1</sup> Genesis speaks of us. We had a civilization and an alphabet while England was a forest. Our kingdom reached from Ararat to the Black Sea and down to the Mediterranean. A thousand years now we have been a people governed by Tartars, Mongols, Seljuks, Arabs, Persians, Turks, Russians. Before them it was the Greeks and Romans who tried to assimilate us. They”—the Armenian chuckled at this—“always choked when they tried it. We bent, yes, but inside remained like steel. We assimilated some of the best traits of the conquering visitors, which made us hardy and impossible to destroy. The Turk made the most ambitious attempt to exterminate us—massacring 1,300,000. But look how we’ve bred like jack-rabbits.

<sup>1</sup> The Armenians are regarded by anthropologists as a Western people. The language, non-Semitic, belongs to the Indo-European family. Armenians originally emigrated from the Alpine regions of southern Europe and settled in the plateaus of Asia Minor, reaching to the Caucasus areas. Mainly because of their Christianity, they kept in constant touch with, and were continually nourished by, Western thought and culture.

Today there are 3,250,000 of us—indestructible as God’s Law. My friend, if anybody survives atomic warfare it will be the Armenian.”

We burst out in laughter.

“They speak of us as an Eastern people, but our culture is a hybrid of West and the residue of civilizations—East and West—that crisscrossed our country. Our religion and language are Western. Our feelings for democracy are Western. Others boast of their martyrs: a thousand and one publicized saints, with more manufactured every year. How about the tens of thousands of Armenians who chose death instead of conversion to Islam? They perished to keep Christ’s holy flame burning. These are the *real* martyrs—the unsung saints, known but to God, unknown to your Western journals. Christianity with us has been no luxury. It was as hard to cling to as life itself, but as long as we kept Him, He kept us.”

The words seemed to pour out of the Armenian.

“See those mounds, those hills?” He pointed with a gnarled hand. “If they could speak they would call out their names: Boghos, Avedis, Antranik, Hagop, Stepan, Sumpad! Armenians are buried everywhere on this desert around us. They fought with the Allies—with the English and the French in World War I to help liberate the Arabs from the Turks. Where did it get us, my friend? Here, there, under those mounds—death. We marched into Jerusalem with Allenby.<sup>2</sup> The dead piled on the dead. We have fertilized the ground for the ambitions of this big power or that. You remember, do you not, how the English and the French deserted us in Turkey in 1921 and 1922, and looked the other

<sup>2</sup> Marshal Allenby’s assault on Beersheba in October 1917 enabled him to liberate the rest of Palestine from the Turks and capture Jerusalem two months later. About 75,000 members of the Armenian Legion of Volunteers died on the Arab and European fronts, fighting with the Allies.

A former United States consul-general, George Horton, wrote of these and other experiences in *The Blight of Asia, An Account of the Systematic Extermination of Christian Populations by Mohammedans and of the Culpability of Certain Great Powers* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill; 1926).

way while Kemal—with French and British arms—massacred those Armenians who had survived six years of massacre. Who came from the West to count the Greeks, Armenians, and other Christians massacred by Kemal? Where was their gratitude? Except for help from America, where were the sweet words of the other Powers? Ah, they call to you only when they can make use of you.”

We arrived at a cluster of buildings in the parched dust-bowl.

“This is my home,” the Armenian said. “Come, meet my family.”

He had one daughter and four sons, one of whom had married an Arab girl. All five, together with the mother and father, had “Armenian eyes.” One can recognize them easily. It isn’t that they’re large, or oval, or sad. It isn’t a physical quality that differentiates them. Look in the eyes of a man who has suffered yet never lost faith in his Creator, in man, or in himself; one who has lived among the dying, laughed among the weeping, sung among the songless, a refugee for a thousand years—and who today looks on life’s adventure hungrily and excitedly, and you will have found “Armenian eyes.”

We found the Demirjians living like Arabs, except that their home was far cleaner. The entire family—save the son who had married a Bedouin—slept in one large room, at one end of which was a bed for the elder Demirjians. The “children,” all of them now grown to full manhood and womanhood, slept on rush mats next to their parents’ bed. They brought us coffee, and cool water from the well. They urged us to stay for supper and spend the night with them, as was the custom of the desert. Moustafa gave a peroration on the heroic qualities of the Armenian male, but he was too much of an Arab to include the Armenian woman, whose role has often been equally heroic in the preservation of the race. A truck loaded with flour was going toward Cairo, so Moustafa, Faris, and I decided to get on it.

“Yallah!”

The road was a thin, pale, yellow ribbon snaking through the wilderness of sand, scrub, and stone. For miles before and behind there was nothing but parched earth and wadies. I was hatless, bouncing in the truck, up and down, and from side to side. How scorchingly the sun beat down! It seared my tongue into a dull, dead weight rolling in my mouth. It burned my eyes with the flame of a torch. It cracked open my lips as the earth around me was cracked open. This was no longer the Negev of Palestine. We had left Palestine and were in Egypt. The frontier was behind us somewhere on the steaming sands. This was the Sinai wilderness through which the ancient Jews wandered for forty years!

#### ABDOU HABI—MAY HIS TRIBE DECREASE!

AT NINE P.M. we reached the Suez Canal and the Ismailia Customs Office. Now we ran into a difficulty of which, this time, I was the direct cause. I had brought \$380 in cash with me. Despite Moustafa’s warning not to state the full amount I declared it all. Faris did not divulge the hundreds of pounds he had brought to buy guns. I had no cause to lie. Besides, if the official hated Americans, Armenians, or journalists, he might take a notion to search me and confiscate any sum above the declared amount. I told the truth—\$380 in cash.

“May I see the money?” the official asked. I produced the money, expecting him to count it. Instead, he laid it aside tenderly, and turned to other matters. After ten minutes of waiting I said: “Count my money, please, and give me a receipt.”

“Shuweiya. Shuwciya. Take it easy. Take it easy.”

He opened the right-hand drawer of his desk, and moved to put the money in.

“Please count the money, now, in my presence,” I insisted.

Abdou Habi—never will I forget the name, may his tribe



decrease—put the greenbacks on the desk. He claimed he didn't know what to do. He had never seen so many dollars before. He would wait till morning, and ask his chief, in the meanwhile keeping possession of the uncounted dollars. We were anxious to get to Cairo that night and were in no mood for delay.

"Telephone your chief and ask him what to do. That's simple enough."

Abdou Habi said he did not wish to disturb His Excellency at this hour.

There were six of us in the wooden shack that was the customs office—five Arabs, one American. The dollars, still uncounted, were on the desk with a paperweight over them. Abdou left his desk. I walked over to Moustafa, standing some feet away, to ask his advice, when suddenly the lights went out, plunging the shack into darkness.

"The money! The money!" I yelled, and hurled myself at the desk.

Long experience in photographic darkrooms has given me a sense of direction in the dark; almost instantly I located the pile of dollars and placed my hand firmly over it. A split second later I felt a pair of moist fat hands crawling over mine. At that instant someone lit a match. A nose's distance from my face was the face of Abdou Habi.

No doubt about it now. Everyone sensed Habi's game. A clamor arose to count the money immediately. I demanded the phone to call the American ambassador. Moustafa began to shout the names of Egypt's cabinet ministers and army generals he claimed to know. Habi was thoroughly intimidated. He suddenly decided that we might perhaps risk disturbing His Excellency. Habi wanted to carry the money, but I refused to give it up until he agreed to count it then and there. After that I permitted him to pocket the bills, and asked Moustafa to sit next to him and let his pistol press against the would-be thief. The customs chief was cordial, apologized for

the "misunderstanding," carefully counted my money, and gave me a certification that I had brought in \$380.

We arrived in Cairo shortly after midnight, and went to the Gloria, a native hotel where the three of us shared a large room. Never was a bed more welcome. Scorched, blistered, and wracked by the day's events, I sank into bed, my money belt around my waist. Inside it also were my Madonna, St. Christopher's Medal, and *mezuzah*, inseparably together.

## GUN-BUYING

THE next morning Moustafa, Faris and I called on a haberdashery dealer. The haberdasher drove us in a French car five miles out, across a railroad crossing, and slowed down when we came to a long, high mud fence surrounding a spacious house. There was a guardhouse at the corner, then another entrance, through which we drove into a large garden. The trio went in. I remained outside talking in Turkish to one of the men. "Where do you get the guns and ammunition?" I asked.

"Why do you ask such questions?"

"Our boys would like to get them as cheaply as possible by going to the source. The need in Palestine is desperate, and money is hard to get."

The man wasn't impressed. "I do not know you," he said, and kept watching me.

Moustafa and the others came down the stairs, toting two heavy, low-slung guns. I must confess to more than ordinary stupidity on such matters. Moustafa said they were anti-tank guns. The smaller of the two was priced at \$250, the larger at \$400. Both were rusty and struck me as terribly overpriced. Both were "asking" prices, which in the Orient seldom have any relation to the actual sales price. We all went into a side

door to stare at stack after stack of packed hand-grenades and mortar shells.

Moustafa asked if the ammunition was still alive.

"*Guaranti. Guaranti,*" the salesman assured him.

That afternoon Moustafa and Faris went gun-shopping again but did not take me along. Apparently I had shown undue curiosity. I was itching to learn the major gun-sources and other data. Laboriously piecing together tidbits, I ascertained that Cairo was bristling with undercover arms and ammunition. Some of the material had been dug out of the El Alamein sands and was German. Considerable quantities had been stolen from British camps or sold by British soldiers to Arabs. Franco's arms salesmen were active. Italian, Swiss, Belgian, and Czechoslovakian agents were also in the market. Nothing American was for sale except some rifles and a few revolvers. Rifles sold from \$65 to \$100, depending on the condition and type. Revolvers brought from \$25 to \$40. Bren and Vickers machine-guns ranged from \$200 to \$350, "asking" prices.

A few days later Moustafa said: "I saw Faris pay three hundred dollars for guns today."

I did not press him and feigned no interest. Moustafa was probably telling the truth but I did not want to arouse any more suspicion than I had so far. Moustafa and Faris made matters no easier for me when they repeatedly told me that they had been seeing the Mufti, whom I was so eager to meet. The Mufti was everywhere, behind nearly every major Arab action, yet he never appeared publicly and few knew his headquarters. He remained mysterious, inscrutable, invisible as ever.

I became particularly alarmed at reports reaching me through Green Shirt scouts that the Ikhwan had warned Jerusalem Arabs to do away with me quietly: I was not to be trusted. The plan was to persuade me to accompany a volunteer gang on one of their numerous raids. I was to be killed either "accidentally" or by "Jewish bullets." I didn't know

whether Labib Bey (a mutual dislike had developed between us) had given the order or whether it came from Sheikh Hassan el Banna himself. It might well come from either if they checked with their friends in the United States. At any rate, I kept to our room during most of my stay in Cairo, avoiding everyone I had formerly seen except Ahmed Hussein and the Green Shirts. I could not help asking Hussein, casually: "Do you hear anything from Katibah or Richardson these days?" He said he had received no word from them. I thought he was telling the truth but I was not sure. I could not get rid of the added suspicion that it was the Green Shirts who had warned the Jerusalem Arabs against me, and that to throw me off the scent they accused the Ikhwan.

Cairo had changed for the worse in the two weeks I had been away. The drums of war were no longer muffled. The city was in a particularly ugly mood. It had just gone through a disastrous police strike that had been suppressed by violent army action. Hardly had the city recovered when 1,300 male nurses of Cairo's two leading hospitals had struck, causing the death of many patients. The government had withheld the facts by announcing that the publication of details would be "considered a serious crime." I sensed the mood of city-wide terror, especially on Friday afternoons when the faithful were exhorted from the mosques by fanatic sheikhs of El Azhar.

I missed the experience of going around with Moustafa and Faris on their gun-hunting missions, but I learned to know Faris better and to distrust him. I felt intuitively that he was being underhanded. I was convinced that he was trying to set Moustafa against me. I had to put an end to this.

Lunching alone with Moustafa one day, I said: "I'd like you to buy me a gun for my personal use against the Jews."

Moustafa looked surprised, then broke into a smile. "I keep telling Faris you are on Allah's side, but he won't believe me. This will convince him."

"A rifle is too bulky, a pistol too weak. Get me a Sten in good condition."

I talked it over with Faris that night. Moustafa had entrusted him with six hundred dollars, borrowing from his relatives by pledging them his share of his father's estate. "Give me £20," Faris said. "I will buy the gun and have it delivered to Jerusalem."

"A gun is like a suit of clothes," I said. "I must see it and like it."

The next morning he took me in a taxi to a native quarter, entered a house and walked through it to a shed in the backyard. Here were all kinds of weapons: I inspected them, but professed not to like their condition. We took a taxi to a carpenter shop. In the rear were half a dozen Sten guns. I chose one.

"Eighteen pounds," the gun merchant said, expecting to get fifteen.

"That is cheap," Faris whispered. "Buy it." He expected a commission.

"Ten pounds," I offered.

"Sixteen and it is yours."

"Ten," I said.

"It cost me fifteen, I swear by Allah."

"It's worth no more than ten pounds," I insisted, and made a move to leave.

I finally bought it for eleven pounds.

#### AT THE MUFTI'S HIDEOUT

"I'll store this with our other guns," Faris said as soon as we left the shop.

"I must come with you and store it personally," I insisted.

Faris had brought along a Sten and a revolver. We all got in a taxi, and laid the armaments on the floor. "Yallah!"

We drove to the outskirts of Cairo. The taxi stopped in front of a secluded, run-down house buried behind a fence

and almost hidden by vines and shrubbery. A lone man sat on the porch. As we opened the iron gate he sprang to his feet. Recognizing Moustafa and Faris he put down his gun and welcomed us. We were not allowed to go inside. Instead, two men came out, inspected our guns and said they needed minor repairs to which they would attend.

As soon as the repairs were done they'd be sent to El Arish (just this side of the Palestine border, and the assembly point for government troops) and there picked up by the owners. We got receipts for the guns, then we got into a taxi again, and drove on.

"That house is a depot for guns and ammunition. It's a very secret place."

"Whose place is it, Moustafa?"

"The Mufti's!"

Faris turned to me, after a moment, and said: "We have a surprise for you."

I completely distrusted the man. "What is it?"

"You will learn very soon."

We had been riding for about five minutes through typical native quarters, when I noticed suddenly that we were driving down a dirt road ending with a roadblock of large gasoline-drums filled with cement. Around them, at the entrances to several spacious houses, were armed guards and plainclothesmen. It was a military headquarters of some kind. The taxi stopped short of the roadblock, and we got out.

Moustafa leaned over toward me. "Don't speak English," he whispered.

We dismissed the driver, and walked into a yard, then onto a porch.

"Where are we, Moustafa?"

"At the Mufti's headquarters. We are going to try to have him see you."

I crossed my fingers, and waited. The two went inside and soon emerged with a dark-haired, sharp-featured young man who spoke excellent English.

"Why do you wish to see His Eminence?" he asked.

"I have admired him for ten years. To travel to Egypt without seeing our Grand Mufti would be like coming to Cairo and not visiting the Pyramids."

"All the American journalists want to see him. He has refused them all."

"Don't confuse me with them. They all work for the Jewish press."

"I will see. Wait here. But I warn you, don't walk around. The guards don't know you."

Ten minutes later the young man returned to the porch and escorted me past a long driveway. The entrance was cluttered with police and detectives. The driveway led into a house set well back from the road—the Mufti's headquarters at 12 Kemal street in the Hilmia Zeitoun section outside Cairo. My guide led me to the adjoining building, where he introduced me to Jacob Khoury, one of the Mufti's many secretaries. I was asked to wait downstairs.

After an hour, Moustafa and Faris joined me. Khoury told us to call tomorrow. We came again, and once again. Each time Moustafa and Faris would see the Mufti while I waited, fuming. I did not meet the Mufti in Cairo. I had to postpone that experience until later.

### GUNS—FOR ALLAH AND FOR PROFIT

IN THE taxi Faris asked me for a loan of fifty dollars. Was this to be the price demanded for the arrangement to meet the Mufti? And if I refused would Faris blackmail me? My dislike for him grew hourly.

"Why do you want fifty dollars?" I asked.

"To buy more guns at bargain prices. I will pay you back in Jerusalem."

I could see now that I should not have declared my \$380. Faris knew I couldn't have spent it all in the ten days we had been in Cairo. He was beginning to shake me down.

"I have no money on me," I said. "I'll let you know tonight."

"Why does he want the money?" I asked Moustafa, later.

"For guns," he said. "I have given him much money of my own. He has promised to pay it back when we sell the guns in Jerusalem."

"I'll give him the money only because you have trusted Faris."

That night I turned over to Faris the equivalent of fifty dollars in Egyptian funds.

He put his arm around my shoulder. "Look, Artour, I'll buy you a Bren gun that you can sell in Jerusalem for three times the price. Guns are cheap here. They are very expensive in Jerusalem." He winked.

"Is that what you're planning to do with the guns you've bought?" I asked.

"Of course. I expect to sell every gun at double and triple the price."

"Then you're buying guns as a business, and not . . . for other reasons?"

"Well, other reasons, too, but there's good profit in buying guns cheap here and selling them dear in Jerusalem. Everybody wants guns there."

Faris' gun racket caused me to look on him with renewed distrust. I knew now he'd never repay the fifty dollars. I didn't mind. It was the cheapest, and the only way to buy my security. I was equally convinced I'd never see the Sten gun I had bought "for my personal use." I had never intended to use it. To begin with I didn't know how, and had no desire to learn. I had bought it to reinstate myself with Faris and Moustafa. I was convinced that Faris would find a way to cheat Moustafa of the money he had loaned him. I didn't disclose

my suspicions, because if the two got to quarreling, they would split company, and I needed the services of both to return safely to Jerusalem.

We were due to leave in a few days. On Palm Sunday I went to the Armenian Church in Cairo. I felt the need for meditation. In our Church there are no one-hour-on-the-hour Masses, nor 11.00 to 12.15 services. Our chants are sung like arias, and take twice as long. It takes five minutes for the congregation to sing the Lord's Prayer. The Armenian churchgoer is no clockwatcher. Every Sunday service is in fact a religious marathon, a colorful, devout, emotionally inspiring pageant that begins before nine and lasts uninterruptedly until about one p.m., often longer if the priest is young and has not fasted, or if a bishop visits the church. In the United States, services have been abridged to last three hours.

To conform with the elaborate ceremonies, no tiny lapel-button palm could satisfy the Armenian. Nothing but man-sized palm leaves, from two to four feet long, are distributed on Palm Sunday. I picked one of these, and waved it on my way "home" to the Gloria. I determined I would hold on to it as long as possible as a symbol of peace and good will, lest I myself succumb to the bloodsoaked, hate-wracked environment in which I found myself. It lay on the bureau in my hotel room until we got ready to leave Cairo. Then I put it in my suitcase. I carried the shriveled palm branch wherever I went, all through the Arab-Israel war, all over the Middle East—a frustrated missionary in quest of peace in the war-torn postwar world—a forlorn hope! I would look at it on the bureau, where I placed it in every hotel room in which I stayed, and say: "I wonder if your day will ever come."

I have the palm leaf home now.

Early one afternoon Moustafa rushed in. "Yallah!"

I had been all but packed for days, restive with the long delay. It was getting unbearably hot and sticky, and the dust of the incredibly filthy Cairo streets stuck to my face, got into

my eyelids, and made me itch frightfully every time I went outside the hotel. The beggars, bootblacks, dragomen, and countless other parasites were becoming more and more dangerous. Unless one was with an Arab or gave *bakshesh*, all the culprit had to do was yell *Yahoodi* and point his finger at the visitor, who would promptly be insulted, stoned, knifed, or mobbed. I was also living under the constant fear of exposure as John Roy Carlson, a name associated with attacks upon the kind of bigotry that in Cairo, was accepted as the acme of patriotism. It was with considerable relief that I strapped my suitcase.

"Are we going by automobile?" That had been our plan.

"No!" Faris answered, "we're taking the train."

It was night when we arrived at El Qantara, on the Suez Canal, and waited for a train to take us to the Palestine border. Scores of volunteer fighters were waiting at the customs, some with irregular papers, others with none at all. Moustafa helped many of them. Among these were a couple of a sort all too common in Arab countries. They were dressed in khaki and carried knapsacks. What seemed to be the "he" of the two was a tall, gangling, nervous English-speaking youth wearing glasses, named Sammy, a Green Shirt member. Sammy's companion, in whose little finger he had entwined his own, was a soft-faced, blue-eyed, slim-waisted Arab from Alexandria, with a perpetual smile. His name was Ismail. When we boarded the train, the two sat close together in the compartment. Every time someone lit a match I saw them either holding hands, or Sammy with his arm around Ismail in the Arab version of necking.

In this fashion and with this company we arrived at the Palestine border, beyond which no trains ran. By good fortune, a truck carrying crates of contraband machinery was leaving for Gaza—the first major town on the other side of the Palestine border. Moustafa spoke to the driver. The driver nodded to us. We leaped in, Holy Warriors once more bound for high adventure and Allah's glory!

## RETURN TO JERUSALEM



*“. . . the most stupid, the most cowardly, the most inefficient soldiers I have ever seen. The Germans and I gave the Arabs many good ideas to destroy the Jewish villages. They are afraid of anything new. They say it will cost them too much money. They are waiting for Allah to help them!”*

Nazar Chalawitch  
Holy Warrior from Yugoslavia

OUR truck, with a dozen assorted Arabs on board, raced toward Gaza.

“Duck your head. You’ll be shot.”

“I’m not afraid of the Jews, Moustafa.”

“Don’t be crazy. They have already put a bullet in my foot!”

I ducked, joining the terror-stricken Holy Warriors who cowered between the crates of merchandise like corraled sheep. I raised my head for a good look at the terror. A mile off the road were the ruins of a kibbutz, with only two buildings left partially standing. Desert surrounded the wreckage. The settlement showed as much life as a neglected cemetery. Actually, this was heroic Kibbutz Kfar Darom, one of the southernmost of the Jewish settlements. A shipwreck in the desert sea, it served as an invaluable observation post for troops and supply movements, and sprang to life only when attacked.

“The Egyptian army will soon massacre those Jews,” Moustafa threatened.<sup>1</sup>

Past the last roadblock and inspection post, we climbed a dusty road that suddenly reared itself over the flatness. We roared down the main street in a terrific cloud of dust, ripping through a maze of donkeys, carts, pastry vendors, bearded Bedouins, and armed Arabs. At the marketplace we stopped with screaming brakes. Alighting, we went to a coffee house perched above the teeming street and shaded from the blistering sun by dried branches. It was a restful nook. Here one could get all the news, establish contacts, and transact his business while drinking hot tea, and smoking the narghileh, without moving once beyond range of a backgammon board.

“The drinks are on me,” I said.

We ordered tall glasses of dark hot tea, heavy with sugar and flavored with fresh mint. Faris and Moustafa looked around to see whom they knew. Additional chairs and more tables were brought over. Sammy and his beloved Ismail continued their mutual adoration, oblivious to everyone else.

I was absorbed by historic Gaza, now a city of dust and donkeys. Without these faithful little animals traffic would have been paralyzed. All day long they trudged at an unvarying pace, head always drooping—docile, four-legged *fellaheen*, carrying everything from gasoline tins to pot-bellied, satin-skirted Arabs three times their weight. Centuries ago thousands of Greeks living here had been forcibly converted to Islam, so that a large proportion of its population was originally Christian. A few Armenian families remained from the large numbers once here. Gaza was an all-Arab community now, Moslem in spirit and appearance. Streets were devoid of

<sup>1</sup> It never did. Before the Mandate Kfar Darom was attacked repeatedly by volunteer bands. Later it was pulverized by Egyptian regulars, who at one time broke into the settlement perimeter and were driven out only after a bitter building-to-building battle. On the night of July 8, 1948, Kfar Darom was booby-trapped and evacuated quietly. A handful of defenders slipped through the Egyptian lines at night, taking along their wounded, and reached Tel Aviv safely.

women; the few who walked were old, veiled, heavily garbed in gloomy black clothing. Male couples promenaded constantly. I photographed them: the result showed one couple with their fingers entwined; another husky couple were walking arm in arm.

From where I was sitting I could make out three distinct markets in this ancient city. To my right were the pushcarts, sidewalk bazaars, and shops with baskets and sacks sprawled on the street. Directly in front was a large square—the gasoline and taxi mart. On my left, at the foot of a high wall shaded by overhanging willows, was a munitions market. Revolvers, grenades, brass knuckles, daggers, and stacks of ammunition were arrayed on mats on the sidewalk. Arabs bargained excitedly and swore their poverty, but pulled out fat rolls of Palestinian currency when the deal was closed. Ragged children darted in and out of the stalls. A truckload of refugees arrived, piled out, and dispersed, carrying their pitiful bundles on their backs and on hired donkeys.

Only one sight gladdened me. Gaza had a sweet tooth. Huge round trays of Oriental desserts were paraded on pushcarts, the peddler weighing the precious pastry on his scales—sometimes adding the weight of his fingers—while urchins sneaked up from behind, scooped the pan with cupped hand and skipped away.

“I’m getting hungry, Moustafa.”

“*Yallah*. We are all hungry.”

#### THE UNWELCOME VISITOR

WE FOUND a nameless little restaurant opposite the Grand Gaza Hotel which had a frontage of only ten feet but was sixty feet deep with a ceiling at least twenty feet high. We took a table in the rear where it was as cool as a wine cellar. A little gray donkey with fuzzy ears and short tail, on its back a gunny

sack loaded with gasoline tins, followed us into the restaurant and decided to stand vigil at our table. The proprietor was not amused. He came roaring out of the kitchen with a soup ladle. A waiter rushed up with pot covers and began to beat them like cymbals in the animal’s ear, while the ladle hammered a drumbeat on its piously bent head. A second waiter began cursing and tugging at the motionless beast, but couldn’t budge it. It just blinked its eyes and withstood the combined assault with astonishing aplomb.

“He must be very hungry,” Moustafa observed.

“He’d make a good soldier,” I said. “Look how calm he is under fire.”

Just then the donkey’s owner rushed in. He was an elderly Bedouin with a straggly beard and was shaking his whip excitedly. I suppose he shouted the equivalent of “How dare you steal my donkey, you cur!” because the words were no sooner out of his mouth than the proprietor rushed on him with the ladle, followed by the first waiter who brandished the pot covers like shields before him and pounced on the old Arab. With a magnificent sense of timing the donkey halted the proceedings by unceremoniously arching its tail and dropping its manure on the spot. While the proprietor and his waiters looked on speechlessly, the donkey deftly turned around and made a quick exit, followed by its master, who leaped on its back as soon as they reached the sidewalk. Off they trotted in a dust cloud.

“*Ma’alesh*. Let’s eat.”

The waiter with the pot covers returned with pan and broom, and cleaned up, cursing loudly. I went into the kitchen and ordered by pointing to pots and pans on the stove containing what I thought I would like. I ordered a plate of rice with lamb and tomato sauce; another of chickpeas with lamb, seasoned with paprika. I topped this with *yoghourt* and drafts of water.

The sight of two soldiers in khaki passing by outside made me jump.

"Moustafa, there go the Followers of Truth!"

He pounced after the pair. I followed. Faris and the lovers, who knew nothing of our vendetta against Sheikh Azaayim's men, stayed behind. We were almost upon the two before they wheeled around. I was ready for anything, but nothing happened. We learned that the Followers had finally crossed the Suez, and were now living at the government barracks at Gaza. They had already participated in an attack against Kibbutz Kfar Darom.

"Did they lose any men?" I asked.

"Yes," Moustafa answered. "They lost twenty-three, and thirty-seven were wounded. They are glad Sheikh Azaayim did not lead them because he, too, might have been dead now."

"But weren't they all supposed to be immune to Jewish bullets?"

At this moment a tall, well-built Sudanese in a rumpled uniform and gun slung across his back approached the two Followers. They greeted him affectionately as a brother Moslem who had fought with them at Kfar Darom and escaped unhurt.

"He did not die because of the paper he carries," Moustafa interpreted.

"What paper?"

The Sudanese opened his shirt and produced a wrinkled parchment suspended by a string around his neck. It was about twelve by eighteen inches, covered with Arabic script in red ink. Moustafa read some of it.

"The *imam* [priest] in his village wrote it," he explained. "It says that the owner of this holy scroll is a true Moslem who is engaged in fighting the *Jihad*. He is therefore immune to all manner of lead and steel."

"Does he believe that?" I asked.

"Yes. Lead and steel will not touch his skin. He believes Allah will lead him away from danger and he will come back alive to his home and family."

A group of young toughs armed to the teeth approached us. Moustafa let out a whoop of joy. As they came nearer I saw that one wore the uniform of the Arab Legion, three were Followers of Truth, two had the Green Shirt insignia. They were led by a sheikh in a white turban, who was wrapped heavily in a flowing gray robe that came to his ankles; wound around his neck, as if it were arctic weather, was a heavy woolen scarf. From his left shoulder hung a sub-machine-gun. I knew I had seen him before. Only when he stretched out his hand in greeting did I recognize him as the St. Patrick's Day spellbinder I had heard in Cairo, who had swayed like a cobra while he mesmerized the Green Shirts. He had grown a full beard, which, with his deep-set eyes and vitriolic face, made him look even more Mephistophelian in daylight than at night.

It was like old home week in Gaza as other comrades joined the crowd. Some twenty of us tramped toward the town square, the *midan*. Once there, the boys decided to spend the afternoon at the beach. I told Moustafa I'd join them later. Our life was so unpredictable from hour to hour that I wanted to see Samson's Tomb before leaving for Jerusalem.

I found it a few dusty blocks away from the main street. Here, on a hillock, was an igloo-shaped structure about ten feet high, with scrub weeds growing over it. It was surrounded by filth and dried human offal. I ducked my head into an opening in the side of the tomb, but recoiled at the unbearable stench. It was hard to believe that according to tradition a majestic temple of the Philistines once stood on this stinking stone heap, and that the blinded Samson in a last mighty effort of bitterness and humiliation pulled it crashing down upon his head, "so the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life."



## BEACH PARTY, ARAB FASHION

I INQUIRED my way to the beach to find Moustafa and the others. The Mediterranean shore here was dotted with rotting hulks and small fishing vessels, and everywhere were huddled male groups. It was one of the strangest beach parties I ever saw. It was strictly stag, with not a single woman in sight, and every man in flowing *gallabiya*, *bournous*, or combination native and European garb. They were playing backgammon, drinking hot tea, coffee, *arak* (a Middle Eastern form of brandy), and smoking the *nargileh*. To the left was a white-washed shanty—the coffee house. Most of the Arabs reclined in the shade provided by blankets hung from poles driven in the sand; some sat on short, squat bulrush chairs.

Guarding the beach were Arab Legion soldiers, wearing the red and white dotted *khaffiya* instead of the customary white. An English army truck was pulled up on the sand: in it were more Legion soldiers—at a time when the presence of the Legion in Palestine was hotly denied by official British spokesmen, as I was to learn later.

I located our party, including Faris and Sammy and Ismail, but Moustafa was nowhere around. Faris was chatting with four companions, and as I watched them I realized that they were homosexuals. The most warlike among them—judging by his dress and armaments—was a rotund, pasty-faced, slovenly man in his late twenties who spoke excellent English.

“Where did you learn English?” I asked.

“From the English soldiers. They have a big camp at Rafa.”

“How do you like the English?”

“Very much, indeed. Some of them are exceptionally friendly and nice. I wish they weren’t planning to leave.”

He was the first Arab I had met who had a kind word for the British.

Sammy and his lover couldn’t seem to have enough of each

other. They were promenading arm in arm on the beach, or with arms around each other’s waists, giggling and carrying on like teen-age sweethearts. In this they were by no means alone. The beach was filled with amorous though less demonstrative men, both young and old, the young often with the old, sitting close together, or back to back, or stretched out full length on the sand.

“Take my picture,” the English-speaking Arab asked. “Make me look like a soldier.” He whipped out his pistol and, aiming it toward Tel Aviv, assumed a fierce look.

“Hold that pose,” I said. “You look like Allah’s messenger.”

This gave me an opening for photographing everyone on the beach—mementos of an all-male beach party. After I had taken a dozen photographs, one of the group introduced himself to me as a member of the Gaza City Council. We chatted for a few moments and I asked:

“How does the war look?”

“See that water?” He pointed with his *nargileh*. “One month from now it will be black as far as the horizon with the nude bodies of floating Jews.”

“*Insh’allah, Insh’allah.*”

Just then Moustafa emerged from a clump of bushes to the left—from a dark-shaded nook into which I had noticed Sammy and Ismail disappear. The two did not reappear until almost an hour later, arm in arm. The mystery deepened when two more members of the party vanished in the same direction—and didn’t return. As the afternoon wore on, one by one the trucks and cars, the lovers old and young, left the beach. “Let’s go look for them,” Moustafa said. We all rose. I deliberately fell in with the effeminate Arab whose photograph I’d taken.

“Our Bible says that Samson used to come to Gaza for his pleasure. Are the two friends for whom we are looking at a place where one may find public women for one’s pleasure?” I inquired teasingly.

The Arab wheeled around, shocked, momentarily speechless.

"We are very strict in Gaza," he gasped. "If we found any such places we would burn them. If we found any such women we would hang them." Quite upset, he left my company and did not talk to me again.

We walked to the clump of bushes, which thickened as we went through them, and emerged into a narrow, dusty street. Ahead was an angular, three-storied, gray stone house, set off by itself, which appeared to be a hotel. Moustafa was on the verge of entering when the two men we were seeking stepped out. One of them was Abdul, a Green Shirt member. His companion, also a youth in his early twenties, was from Gaza.

"We were praying," Abdul explained, smiling.

When we had walked back to Gaza's main street, we split company. The others had been invited to a dinner party by the Gaza Council member. It was getting dark fast. I turned to Moustafa.

"What'll we do now?"

"We have been invited to another place," Moustafa said mysteriously. "We will go there later. First, let's find a place to sleep."

The obvious place for us was the Grand Gaza Hotel, opposite the restaurant where we had eaten. The Grand Gaza Hotel was strictly a misnomer. By American standards it was fourth rate, but it was the best the city of Samson could offer. Moustafa and I got a room on the top floor with two cots, two chairs and a candle. There was no other furniture, not even a washpan. To wash, one used the community tap and community soap and towel on the floor below. The place was reasonably clean and gave no evidence of harboring crawling visitors. We washed, Moustafa again borrowed my comb, and we stepped out.

"Where are we going, Moustafa?"

"You will be very much surprised. Trust me."

The streets were now pitch dark. There was no moon. Electric power had been cut off long ago. Moustafa was not familiar with the section and every few minutes he paused to

ask directions. Walking through a tortuous maze of blacked-out alleys, stumbling over deep ruts and protruding rocks, I felt we would never reach our destination, whatever Allah had decreed it to be.

"Moustafa, you aren't taking me to Abdul's prayer house?"

"You are too impatient, Artour. Wait."

Finally we came to a high wall, followed it for a block, and then turned to find ourselves before a high wide gate topped with iron spikes. We banged on it. We heard the shuffling of feet, and a voice, echoing sharply in the deathly stillness, challenged us in Arabic. Moustafa answered; one of the doors was swung open by an Arab, and we found ourselves in a large courtyard. At the farther end was a house with lights shining from the first- and second-story windows.

"Is it all right to speak English?"

"Yes. You can also talk German if you wish."

That put me on guard. The Arab gateman now opened an inner door and motioned us into a large room lighted by two kerosene lamps, which cast a flickering light on a group of men standing near a large table covered with food.

#### DINNER WITH NAZI HERRENVOLK

MY GAZE swept past a well-dressed Arab in flowing robes, who was apparently the host, and fell upon seven men, six of them in uniform. The seventh was a brown-haired non-German, apparently a Slav. His right sleeve hung empty from the shoulder of his dark-green American officer's coat. All seven stared at us stiffly.

"Guten Abend, Kameraden! Good evening, comrades. Heil!" I said, giving the short-arm Nazi salute as I had done innumerable times at Bund meetings.

A jet of steam appeared to have struck them: the faces melted instantly and burst into smiles. The six snapped their

heels, heiled back in unison, and all began talking at once in German.

"Ach, meine Freunde, meine Kunde der deutschen Sprache ist unglücklicherweise nicht so gross wie meine Liebe für das deutsche Volk. Ah, my friends. Unfortunately my knowledge of German is not so strong as my love for the German people." Over and again I had used that at Bund meetings.

One of the Nazis translated my effusion into Arabic, much to the delight of our host. Seeing me so well received, Moustafa added his praise of the manly, bold, loyal Armenian who had been living with the Arabs. As usual, my American citizenship was an incidental detail. Our host, beside himself, kept repeating: "Ahlan wa sahlen, mit ahlan wa sahlen! Sharraftuna! Hallet el-baraka! Welcome and welcome again! What an honor! What a pleasure! What a blessing from Allah!"

The only one to speak English among the Germans was introduced to me as Gerhard. He had a long face, dark hair, and sideburns, and had perfected his English at a British prisoner-of-war camp. As we sat down to a lavish dinner, I asked him:

"How did you escape?"

"Through the Mufti's help. Twenty of us crossed the Canal in a boat one night. Cars were waiting for us on the other side."

"Only twenty have escaped?"

"Oh, no. More, hundreds more—some by hiding under merchandise in trucks. Others are disguising themselves as Arabs and carrying false papers, and others get through by bribing. Customs officials at Ismailia are friendly. *Der Grossmufti* makes all the arrangements. In a few days we expect twenty-five more comrades here. They will come with guns."

"English guns?"

"*Natürlich*. Stolen from camp or sold by English soldiers. The Arabs get much equipment that way."

"Who is our host?"

"He is a relative of the Mufti. Many of the Mufti's cousins and nephews are in Gaza and rule the city. In a few weeks Gaza will become the capital of the Mufti's Palestine government. The Egyptian army will also make its headquarters here."

"How many Germans in the Suez camps?" I asked.

"Many thousands. Perhaps 12,500 or more of the Afrika Korps. There are also many high officers, even some generals. Sitting at this table are a captain and two lieutenants. I was a lieutenant with Rommel," Gerhard said. After a moment he shook his head. "These Arabs make big talk but do not fight like an army. They are not trained. They do not know discipline. We fought with them against the Jewish villages. We know. That man," he said, pointing to the amputee, "is a Yugoslav Moslem. He lost his arm in Haifa. There's another Yugoslav recuperating at the Civilian Hospital here in Gaza. If you want to know about the Arabs as fighters, go see him. He has been with them longer than I have."

Our host was generous, and constantly pushed platters of food before us. "*Tafaddal*. Please." The Nazis eat heartily. They seemed happy and confident, and only one of them—Friedrich, a short but powerfully built young man in leggings—appeared surly. He said little, but appeared to be watching me carefully.

Finally our host had the coffee brought in.

"*Sallim idek*, may God preserve your hands," I said. Later, when I had finished the tar-black brew and put down the cup, I added: "*Kahwe daime*. May you always have coffee."

My host beamed at my choice vocabulary.

It was eleven o'clock as Moustafa and I rose to leave. There was much salaaming and hand shaking back and forth. The Nazis—except Friedrich, who gave us a cold, correct quick handshake—pumped our hands. Our host said, "*Sharrifna tani, marra, insh'allah*. Come again when Allah wills it.

"*Mae es-salame. Mae es-salame*. God speed. God speed."

"*Mamnunak*. Our thanks to you," we said, and walked into the night.

### THE MADMAN

MOUSTAFA and I walked in silence through the blacked-out streets. Gaza was as dead as Samson's Tomb, with not a living thing visible or audible. Only an occasional light flickered from a second-story window: those on the first floor were either heavily latticed or covered with wooden shutters locked tight. Then, in the silence, I became aware of a muffled shuffling of feet behind us. I turned around several times uneasily, but saw nothing.

"Somebody is following us, Moustafa. Stop now, and listen. . . ."

The shuffling continued for a few seconds, then stopped. It began again when we resumed walking.

"You are right," Moustafa said, softly, reaching for his holster. "What have you to protect yourself?"

"You know I have nothing but a Boy Scout knife."

We walked faster. "How many are there?" I asked.

"I think only one, unless they are keeping in perfect step."

I recalled that Bedouin tribes sometimes welcomed a stranger, or even an enemy, to their home, honored him at their table, then followed him and stabbed him later. I wondered if our host would attempt such a thing. Or could it be some of the Nazis—Friedrich, for instance? It could be a Follower of Truth. And there was the Gaza man whom I'd insulted at the beach. His kind were known to hire assassins. . . . It was still a long way to the Grand Gaza Hotel.

Without breaking step Moustafa leaned over and whispered: "When I take your hand in mine, run. Then we will hide."

We broke into a double run, hand in hand, and heard our pursuer follow.

"If there are more than one we do nothing," Moustafa said, breathing hard. "If we see only one, I will go for his throat, you strike at his heart. But make no noise. Be sure nothing drops from your pockets. . . . Now hide in that doorway. I will be on this side. . . ."

We slunk into the shadows, opposite each other, so that the pursuer would have to pass between us. I pulled back as far as I could. Although Moustafa was hardly fifteen feet away he was invisible. I waited, breathing heavily but noiselessly through my mouth.

A figure emerged dimly from the blackness of night and approached slowly. He veered to the right—the side where I was crouching. He hugged the walls, apparently suspecting a trap. I bent low, my knife blade open, ready to pounce on him if he attacked first. The shadowy figure slipped by within three feet of me. I saw him peering to the left and ahead of him. He was a short man, wearing what seemed to be a European coat and narrow trousers. He passed, and I waited for a few minutes that seemed endless.

"Moustafa," I whispered hoarsely. "He's gone."

"Sssshhh. Maybe he also is hiding. Wait."

I straightened out, glued myself against the doorway and now saw the outlines of Moustafa's husky frame. After several more minutes he moved out of the doorway. "Stick close." I followed him. There was no sound now except our soft tread. Either the pursuer had continued up the street, or was lurking somewhere in the inky stillness. We moved ahead gingerly, and the suspense became even more unbearable than before. But we had lost all track of the stranger. The riddle of his identity deepened. Who? Why? Had we been wise in hiding?

It was midnight when we broke into the town square, as dark and deserted as the rest of Gaza. We walked cautiously past the boarded shops of main street, and slipped into our hotel. No one seemed to be in the narrow vestibule. The hotel itself was on the second floor, the entrance barred by an

iron grated door midway on the stairs. We knocked. The night clerk called out sleepily from an inner room. He would not let us in, he said, until he had looked us up in the register. It would take a few minutes—Arab minutes! We sat down on the stairs in the dark while the clerk, cursing the world at large, looked for the register. At long last he demanded the details of Moustafa's registration. I had to call out my passport number and spell out my name. Finally the clerk, in slippers and red striped pajamas, stumbled down his half of the stairs and let us go up.

"I must be careful," he explained. "There was a stranger here a short time ago."

"Who was he?" Moustafa asked quickly.

"I do not know. He was not an Arab."

The iron gate had hardly been closed when someone crashed open the door below. Then there was a knocking and shaking of the iron grill. The terrified night clerk begged us to take charge. Moustafa's queries brought a reply in hesitant but adequate Arabic, spoken in a heavy guttural accent.

"It's one of the Germans," Moustafa said.

"Invite him to our room."

"First we will take away his gun if he has any."

He certainly had one. At the point of Moustafa's drawn pistol, the Nazi placed his revolver on the night clerk's desk. We followed the German to our room and made him sit on the chair while Moustafa and I faced him from our beds. It was Friedrich: a beet-red, prematurely bald, ugly man with colorless eyes buried in a hatchet face. He came to the point with surprising frankness.

"I followed you to shoot you," he said in good English.

I felt a pricking of my scalp.

"One, or the both of us?" I asked.

"You," he snarled. "You are a Jew!"

Moustafa and I laughed nervously. "Artour is an Armenian," Moustafa said.

"That is the same as a Jew. The English, the Jews, the

Armenians, and the Americans must be exterminated!" There was no doubt that Friedrich meant it, for his eyes took on an almost maniacal look.

It required a long time and a full display of my assorted documents, including the one obtained from my church attesting to my Christian faith, to prove to him that Jews were Jews and Armenians were Armenians. "We are such old-time Aryans," I said, "that *Bundesführer* Fritz Kuhn once said that Christ was an Armenian, not a Jew." It happened to be true—the fact that Kuhn told the lie.

When the German left it was past two o'clock. We snuffed out the candle. It was a long time before I fell asleep.

#### "THE MOST STUPID SOLDIERS"

"WHAT are we going to do this morning, Moustafa?"

"As soon as Faris comes we will go to El Arish for the guns."

I wanted to talk to the Yugoslav at the hospital. "Moustafa, let's first go to the hospital," I suggested. "There are Armenian nurses there. I will introduce you to them. Take your pick."

I counted on Moustafa to get me inside the hospital. I wasn't sure I could manage it myself. Things worked out as planned. While Moustafa indulged in a blind-alley flirtation with two Armenian nurses, I strolled through the wards. One of the patients introduced himself to me as Nazar Chalawitch, a former captain in Yugoslav quisling Pavelich's army, now an Arab fighter who was convalescing. I told him I was Gerhard's friend.

"How did you get hurt?" I asked.

"Fighting with the most stupid, the most cowardly, the most inefficient soldiers I have ever seen," Nazar exploded. "The Germans and I gave the Arabs many good ideas to de-

stroy the Jewish villages. They are afraid of anything new. They say it will cost them too much money. They are waiting for Allah to help them!"

Deeply embittered, he went on: "If those Arabs had followed orders we'd have cleaned out the Jews long ago. Take this village outside Gaza [Kibbutz Kfar Darom]. We made a perfect plan to attack it with three columns: 34 Germans and eight Yugoslavs in one column, 210 Ikhwan in another; a hundred Followers of Truth making the third column. We were to assemble exactly at midnight and march from three sides. The Germans were on time. Ikhwan came three hours late. The others—just before sunrise! We couldn't surprise the Jews. We attacked anyway—lost about forty men. A bullet went through my hip."

When I returned to Moustafa, he had already given up his strenuous attempts to date one of the nurses. Outside the hospital he turned to me and blew up. "Must you be a saint to go out with an Armenian?" he demanded, disgusted.

"Yallah!"

Faris was waiting for us at the hotel with a truck, and off we went to the Egyptian military base at El Arish, where we were directed to a thick-walled, heavily guarded building. Only one person at a time was allowed entry, and Faris went in with what he said were receipts for the guns we expected. He emerged to say that no one knew anything about them.

"Go in yourself, Moustafa, and ask."

Moustafa returned empty-handed, a dejected figure. The guns had simply disappeared. "If we don't find those guns and sell them, I have lost everything. I borrowed the money," he said pathetically.

"Don't worry, Moustafa. Allah will find them."

Faris—whose investment was much larger than Moustafa's—seemed unconcerned. He chatted amiably all the way back to Gaza.

Two mornings later Faris announced we could ride part way to Jerusalem, at least. He had located a sheik's son who

had driven in to buy gasoline and was prepared to give us a lift to Jerusalem. We gladly accepted his offer. Of the Green Shirts, we could locate only Sammy and Ismail. We left the others behind and set off.

## WE ARRIVE AT THE TOMB CITY

HALF WAY to Jerusalem the road was marked by ancient olive groves, the trees gnarled like an octogenarian's hand. Between the trees a farmer ploughed with a camel—the skirts of his *gallabiya* pulled above the knees and tucked into a sash around his waist, revealing his loose underwear. The plough was of wood, as in the days when Abraham first trudged over these fields. Down the road came barefooted women with enormous bundles of brushwood balanced on their heads, overshadowing their faces. Walking with her mother, a little girl balanced a large kettle, black with soot, on her head. In the shade a group of men lounged, gossiping and smoking, their donkeys dozing behind them. In the fields, the women worked. This was the Arab world.

We reached a hilltop: below us spread a deep-green valley. A sparkling stream wound its way around a tiny hamlet in the foothills. In the distance rose the spires of Jerusalem. To our right were the four *kibbutzim* composing the Kfar Etzion block. As we stopped to rest, a truck laden with volunteers drove up, and we heard the latest news. It was bad. The Arabs were being pushed back gradually from their New City positions. The rich Arabs and most of the Arab leaders had already fled Jerusalem. "The deserting cowards!" Moustafa exploded. The Arabs lacked heavy guns and there was disunity in the leadership since Abdul Kader el Husseini's death.

We moved into Jerusalem. I had come here for the first time only three weeks before. The city had changed radically. Its heart had been plucked out, its life-throb silenced. It was

late afternoon when we arrived, but there were few pedestrians, mostly old people. Roadblocks, sandbags, dragon's-teeth were everywhere, and barbed wire coated with rust. Most of the homes were deserted, the shops boarded up. Tommies in khaki, wearing berets with red pompoms, prowled in armored cars. They searched and questioned everyone crossing from one zone to another; after that, Jewish and Arab vigilantes took over. Overturned trucks lay rusting, stripped of tires and movable gear. Dynamited buildings were everywhere. The dark red pool in the middle of the street might be the spot where a horse had bled to death, or a man was shot. The ripped-up sidewalk marked the explosion of a mortar.

Cities, I thought, are like human beings. Dressed in brick, mortar, stone and steel, they beat with a pulse that is the collective soul of their people. They live, breathe, and die like humans. There are ghost cities; cities of sin or sorrow, hard and harsh and masculine like New York; reckless and free cities; tradition-bound cities; hectic cities; sleepy cities; or gay and feminine cities, like Paris. When they are living, cities have souls of their own. But when the creeping paralysis of terror comes, they die inside like human beings.

The little things that make the world come alive—a woman with a shopping basket, gossiping; a man waiting for a bus, smoking; an exasperated mother spanking her bawling child; a busy grocery, a coffee shop, a traffic policeman—all these were now gone from Jerusalem. Fear and death were in the air you breathed, in every step you took. There was the terror of the unseen trigger-hand—English, Arab, Jew, depending on which side you stood—in the whine of every bullet, the crash of every shell. The poisons of hatred, long simmering, were now erupting and spilling over on every side of the once Holy City. A sense of impending calamity hung in the air; a dread vacuum was the new spirit, and desolation the “new look” of the tomb city.

## (CHAPTER XII)

### WITH THE ARABS IN JERUSALEM



*From the lampposts hang all the RABBIS  
But hang HERTZOG highest of all  
And when you have hung all the Jew-boys  
Then blow up their damned WAILING WALL.  
AMO [Arab Military Organization]*

I STOOD under a tree on the Hill of Evil Counsel on an incomparably beautiful and clear May morning, each Jerusalem landmark radiantly etched against a cloudless sky. Sheep grazed in the olive grove below me—guarded by an Arab in battle dress, rifle on lap, grenades dangling from his belt. In the heavens, God was in His glory. On earth hate reigned supreme. The whine of snipers' bullets was constant, like the drone of a giant mosquito. It was the season for mating, but shells and the rattle of machine-guns had driven off the birds.

Jerusalem was beginning to fall apart as a city, disintegrating. Mail delivery had stopped. The railroad yard was deserted. The magistrates had fled: the courts and police stations were closed. Law and order was in the hands of local committees. You were condemned, imprisoned, or shot by vigilante gangs. Thieving was normal and went unpunished. It began with a deserted home, and continued with the theft of British army and government property: office furniture, files, furnaces, doors, windowpanes. Vehicles—trucks, jeeps, armored cars, even post-office vans—were stolen unless under guard.

The *Palestine Post* ran a daily column listing casualties. By May 1, 1948, 5,014 had died (189 English, 1,236 Jews, 3,569 Arabs) and 6,632 had been wounded.

I strolled over to the Public Information Office and wandered into the small canteen operated there for the correspondents. Jewish and Arab newspapermen still mixed: coolly, suspiciously. The Jewish boys came mainly to get a good meal. Ahmed, the Arab counterman, served eggs, milk, beer, potatoes, and coffee, and had cigarettes for sale—all rare in the New City. When Jews tried to buy food to take home, Ahmed would say: "If I sold it to you the Arabs would cut my body into small pieces." I met an Arab here, named Nassib Boulos, working for the British as a propagandist, and at the same time serving as a string correspondent for *Life* magazine. Boulos always hovered around the American newsmen, trying to get a line on each one. He came over to my table.

"I hear you're a Zionist."

"I don't know what Zionism is. I haven't seen enough of the Jews."

I had a premonition that Boulos would cross my path later on, and make trouble. In the days that followed, a series of nasty anti-Jewish booklets and leaflets began to circulate among correspondents, anonymously signed "AMO"—the Arab Military Organization, an adjunct of the Mufti's Arab Higher Committee. Addressed to "British Soldiers! British Policemen! British Civilians!" they sought to incite non-Arabs against the Jews. One of the leaflets was in doggerel:

Put a bomb in the [Jewish] Agency Buildings  
Wipe the Synagogues all off the earth,  
And make every damned son of ZION  
Regret the day of his birth.  
From the lampposts hang all the RABBIS  
But hang HERTZOG<sup>1</sup> highest of all  
And when you have hung all the Jew-boys

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Isaac Halevy Herzog, then Chief Rabbi of Palestine, later Rabbi of Israel.

Then blow up their damned WAILING WALL. . . .  
You will find you are down as the Heroes  
Of the last and the greatest Crusade,  
And then you will all go to HEAVEN  
And I WILL BE THERE AS WELL.  
And we all charge our glasses,  
AND DRINK TO JEWS THERE IN HELL.

### LIFE IN OSBORNE HOUSE

AGAINST the panorama of growing death and destruction, life was exciting in Osborne House, our Arab headquarters on Deir Aboutor. It had become suicidal to cross no-man's land; I made no attempt now, as I had when here earlier, to sleep at the "Y." The road was under constant and intense Arab surveillance. So I lived with the boys in Osborne House, sleeping with them on mats; shaving, washing, and bathing daily in a pint of water or less. Our diet consisted of olives, scallions, *halvah*, and stale bread donated by Old City bakeries. Occasionally we would have bean stew, or goulash of some kind, cooked by Sabri, who during our absence had become quartermaster. Captain Zaki had feathered his nest nicely: he was second in charge of Deir Aboutor defenses and Moustafa found himself out of place. Sammy and Ismail made themselves at home sleeping together on adjoining mats in a store-room. Faris strutted about like a general.

The collection of Green Shirts and other volunteers had become more bizarre. Syrian soldiers—swarthy, sullen fellows, bristling with weapons—had requisitioned an adjoining house. They loved to have their pictures taken and I obliged them by running a souvenir picture service. They taught me much about Arab life and habits. Every afternoon I watched them strip down to the waist and engage in a traditional Arab pastime: lice-hunting. They picked their clothes clean, but never



cleaned their rifles. A rifle is supposed to be cleaned and oiled periodically, if not after every battle. But in all the months I was with the Arabs I never saw one cleaned or oiled. Nor did I see any being repaired. If a rifle didn't work, it was usually laid aside.

The Arabs were equally careless with hand-grenades. My most anxious moments were spent when the volunteers began toying with English- and French-made grenades, tossing them from hand to hand, or taking them apart "to see what was inside." I heard of many fatal accidents and met several horribly mutilated Arabs. Whenever I was about, a half dozen would encircle me, unhook their grenades, jiggle the pull-ring, and do other weird stunts threatening to blow us all up. I'd dash behind the sandbags while they, the brave Arabs, played with dynamite and laughed at the terrified *Amrikani*.

I observed that the fat-bellied Zaki paid increasing attention to Ismail. At first Ismail slept at Osborne House, with the rest of the volunteers. Then one day he removed his belongings and went to a nearby house which Captain Zaki had appropriated for himself and other members of the defense staff. Every morning after this Sabri would soft-boil four eggs, wrap them in a towel, and take them over, together with oranges, bananas, cheese, honey or jam, *halvah*, olives, white bread, and coffee. We all envied this diet and grumbled to Sabri about it.

"These are my orders. I must do as the captain commands."

To cut into these regal breakfasts, I determined to get into Ismail's good graces. This was not difficult. I suggested taking his photograph. I decorated him with guns and cartridge belts, told him he was handsome, and photographed him to his heart's delight. When he offered to pay, I suggested settling for a breakfast. Next morning Sabri asked me to come along when he took breakfast over. Taking six soft-boiled eggs and quantities of other food, he led me to a room which was bare except for two beds, a chest of drawers, and a table. Zaki and Ismail were in their pajamas. I pulled up a chair and joined them at breakfast. Later, by photographing Zaki gratis and

taking more pictures of Ismail I made sure of a fine breakfast every morning until the Mandate ended and real war broke out.

In charge of our arsenal in Osborne House—a small boarded-up back room piled high with sandbags—was one of the bloodthirstiest Arabs I ever met. He was a thin, morbid fanatic with blazing eyes, named Ali. I won his friendship by photographing him repeatedly in the act of firing a Bren gun. Thereafter he would often tip me off to the location of extra food on the premises. We would steal it together and eat it in the privacy of our arsenal. I was careful not to cross Ali, for he had a vile temper. I had seen him fly at a Green Shirter with a knife; only the brawny Moustafa was able to stop him. Sitting on a box of bullets or grenades, I would look at Ali with the conviction that I was facing a dormant savage, a ruthless killer whose passions were violently suppressed. One day, after we had finished a can of purloined sardines, I started off impressively with a bare-faced lie:

"Ali, I have studied medicine, psychology, and the science of the human mind. I can tell many things about a person by looking at him. You are a very strong and a brave Arab, but you are afraid to do what your heart dictates. Tell me what it is. Maybe we can do it together."

Ali looked at me intently, with a savage glint in his eyes which made me uncomfortable. We were alone; he was armed, and I knew that I was no match for a man whom I felt instinctively was a killer. . . . Ali opened up gradually, first by confessing that as a boy he had beaten a playmate to death because he caught him stealing. Growing up in a Cairo slum—with no schooling or formal training—Ali had developed a fanatic sense of right and wrong. All wrong was to be punished by death in order to end the progeny of wrongdoers and eliminate evil from the world.

"Who will determine what is right and wrong?" I asked.

"I make the judgment," Ali said. He had been jailed. "It

was my own fault. I was careless," he explained, then told me this story. He had been delegated to do away with an Egyptian official in Cairo. Planning the attack carefully, Ali had made a sketch of the official's itinerary and marked with an X the spot from which he was to fire his revolver. In his excitement Ali had lost the diagram.

"I didn't need the paper. I remembered everything," he said. "I was at the place an hour early. I had the gun in my coat pocket, with my hand always on the trigger. I was afraid I would shoot myself, so I went into a doorway to change the position of my gun. Four men followed me. They beat me on the head, and took me to the *karakol*. They had found my diagram on the street. In my house the police found another sketch. They beat me again, and once again in the *karakol*. I confessed because I did not want to be beaten any more. I was in jail two years." Ali's appetite had been merely whetted. "I want revenge. I failed in my duty once. I must clear myself before Allah. I must kill Jews, many Jews. I must kill till my arm is tired. I must not stop killing Jews till the bodies are this high. . . ." The wild Arab brought one hand to his chin. "I must do one more thing. . . . For this I need your help, Artour."

"Your wish is my command, Ali."

"I want you to come with me the next time we fight the *Yahood*. When I catch a Jew alive I want you to be with me—with your camera."

"Why do you want me with my camera?" I asked curiously.

"I want you to take one picture of me holding the living Jew by the throat. I want you to take another picture while I stab the Jew in the neck. Then I want pictures as I stab him again and again in the neck, in the face, in the heart, in his belly . . . with this knife!" Ali whipped out a vicious blade. "After I have killed the Jew I want you to photograph me drinking his blood."

"While it is still warm, I suppose."

"Yes, while it is running warm from his body," Ali affirmed.

"Okay, I'll take the pictures!"

What else could I say?

## A HUNTING PARTY

THAT night Ali, Moustafa, Captain Zaki, Faris, and a dozen others participated in a party to which I was invited. All afternoon the Arabs had been carting in clothing and furniture. Toward evening, Captain Zaki sent for me. Accompanied by two of the gang we walked for several hundred yards until we came to a home in a clump of trees. Household goods were piled high in the doorway. The doors had been smashed open. Inside, I found the boys going through the drawers, sounding the walls and floor.

"This was the house of a Jew," Captain Zaki said. "We want you to look at this photograph equipment and tell us what it's worth."

From a drawer he fished out odd accessories, worth only a pound or two.

"Whose home was it?" I asked curiously.

"We don't know. It's the house of a Jew," Captain Zaki repeated. "Now we want you to go through his books and papers and tell us if he was a spy."

The library was in shambles, with books strewn everywhere. Many were in German and French, a few in Hebrew. There were also numerous phonograph records and art albums. The Arabs looked at them, tore out some pages, threw down the rest, and stamped on them. The owners had obviously been scholars of some sort. In a pile of papers kicked into a corner, I found my first clue, a stack of calling cards: "Dr. Albert K. Henschel, Dr. Elizabeth Henschel-Simon." Rummaging around, I found an envelope addressed to "Mrs. Simon

Henschel, Dept. of Antiquities, Jerusalem." Inside was a letter on the stationery of the Palestine Exploration Fund, London. It was dated July 16, 1938, and gave details for a new museum exhibit case.

A more revealing letter was addressed to Mrs. Simon-Henschel, "Palestine Archæological Museum." Numerous letters in unreadable German script bore the return address: "Dr. Henschel, American Expedition, Akaba." A letter from "Mrs. Rose Pandelides, Chicago," announced the death of her husband, "Costa." Mrs. Henschel-Simon's typewritten answer told all I needed to know about the couple in whose home I found myself:

We feel so much with you and understand your sorrow. We wanted to tell you and Mr. Pandelides who was with us when we first saw this country, what had happened to us and how happy we feel. We are grateful to Fate who seems to give us some quiet years before trouble starts again. Because this East is as treacherous a soil as Europe is. But meanwhile we enjoy our work and our little house [the one that we were now in] which we have got just outside the town so that we can reach it in a few minutes with the car.

My husband has taken up his advertising drawing with good success which suffered only through the disturbances, and I do again museum work as I did in Germany. As Mr. Rockefeller enabled the work to be done on a broader base than the [Palestinian] Government would have done by itself, I feel very much indebted to America. But if you come East, we hope you will come and see us. . . .

Captain Zaki came over. "What have you found?"

"Only letters. The Jews here were refugees from Germany."

I looked through another handful. One from England, was from "Kathrine," to "Aunt Ebeth":

I had ever so many presents for Christmas and my birthday. Mummy made me a green costume with a tweed jacket

and bought me a camel hair coat with a hood. Also I had some books and chocolates. . . . They have built four Air Raid Shelters in our playground, so that we don't have much room to play in. . . . Have you still got any cats in your house? We haven't any animals at present. Dorothea wants some very badly, but Daddy is rather against the idea.

I was moved, reading these letters from one stranger to another. How could one ever foretell the course of life? . . .

"What are these?" Carrying a strongbox under one arm, Captain Zaki brought over a cabinet filled with film negatives—photographs of Arab life. It was a precious collection.

"I would like to have these for myself," I said.

"We will take it up with the defense committee," Zaki answered, stiffly. "We will go back now."

He turned, strongbox under one arm, cabinet under the other, and walked out. Holding a stack of letters, I followed him. Night had come, dark and moonless. But not silent. Jerusalem was rarely quiet at night. The rat-tat-tat of machine-gun and the sharp crack of a rifle mingled with the muffled roar of a shell. On this night tracer bullets were swishing through the darkness like a swarm of fiery comets. I showed the way with a flashlight. Behind us the boys were carting away household goods in wheelbarrows and improvised stretchers. Zaki and I talked little; we had little in common. Since coming to Deir Aboutor he had grown fat through overeating and overindulging.

"What are you going to do with the books and furniture, Zaki?"

"Sell them in Jerusalem and use the money for arms and food."

Back at the Osborne House everyone gathered around the strongbox Zaki had been carrying. It was small, heavy, and important-looking. It was passed from hand to hand, as each tried with jack-knife and screwdriver to force the lock. The Arabs fumed and sweated and cursed, but the combined might

and main of the Deir Aboutor defense proved unable to open a metal box about a foot square.

"Get the American!"

"Will you give me the negatives if I open the box?" I bargained.

I took a close look at the box. It was shaped like a sardine can—only larger and stronger. I laid it upside down, while Zaki and Faris put their feet at both ends to keep it steady. I hammered the edge of a screwdriver against the metal, and within a few minutes had opened the box—much to the amazement of the Arabs.

"You are very clever, Artour," Zaki said.

"Will you give me the negatives now?"

The strong box was placed on the table, and the Arabs gathered around in anticipation. One by one the articles were pulled out. They were a few Palestinian coins, a folded document in German which seemed to be a deed to something, and a stack of receipted bills. The Henschels hadn't proved the fools the Arabs had taken them to be. . . . I had my eyes on the negative file. Though I tried again and again, and even offered Zaki five pounds—a huge sum for a penniless adventure—he could not induce the others to part with it.

### THE ARABS IN ACTION

NEXT morning hell broke loose. Up to this time Haganah forces had ignored us, apparently unaware of our strong Arab concentrations at Deir Aboutor. But by ten a.m. bullets were whizzing over our heads. At first they were wild and whistled through the trees, but they were soon bouncing off the stone masonry of Osborne House. It was time to duck—and fight back.

*Yallah!*

Moustafa, whose leadership up to this time had been

eclipsed by Zaki's superior political generalship, assumed command of about forty men. Bren gun in hand, he waved them toward an embankment above a grove where sheep grazed. But the sheep had already disappeared by the time Moustafa and his men set up their machine-guns. He and the gang made a terrific din, firing wildly in the general direction of Jews, sending over ten shells to every Jewish shell. Taking advantage of the Arabs' passion for firing off their weapons, the Haganah deliberately provoked them to fire with all they had, wasting their ammunition against entrenched Jewish positions. By this and other devices, the Jews time and again succeeded in reducing the effect of the superior firing power of the Arabs.

"They are going to attack us," Moustafa yelled, excitedly, firing another round. "We must show we are not afraid, and have plenty of bullets."

Promptly at noon the Haganah ceased its fire, but the Arabs kept going until their ammunition gave out. I was convinced that the Haganah was either probing into the strength of our Deir Aboutor defenders, or was feinting while it planned to attack elsewhere. In a few hours the Jewish plan became evident.

We had just finished a meal of bread and cold vegetable stew when an Iraqi courier rushed in excitedly. Moustafa faced him. Zaki had been absent during the morning fighting; and although he was nominally in charge, he now sat passively while Moustafa took over. I thought of how often action exposes one's true character.

"The Jews are attacking Katamon! Every man come to help!"

"*Yallah!*" Moustafa's roaring voice rallied a rabble of several hundred Holy Warriors. "*Yallah, Katamon!*" About a dozen were left behind with Zaki, including, of course, Ismail. The Egyptians and Syrians leaped into trucks and armored buses, and I climbed in on the heels of Moustafa, not daring to leave his side. Off we roared toward Katamon, a suburb of Jerusalem built on a slow-rising hill. On its crest

was the Greek Monastery of St. Simeon, whose sanctity had long ago been violated by Iraqi troops who made it their headquarters. They were part of an estimated eight thousand foreign Arabs who had infiltrated into the Jerusalem area. From the heights of Katamon the Iraqis had been keeping up a day and night bombardment of a sprawling Jewish settlement, named Mekor Hayim, in the valley below, as well as Rehavia, and other sections of the New City.

Jammed with Holy Warriors, our trucks roared up in time to see a group of Iraqis setting up a mortar and begin blazing away toward Mekor Hayim. While some of our own boys dashed up to the crest of the hill, Moustafa and others took positions behind barricades and also began to fire in a wild and haphazard fashion at the Jewish settlement, which was minding its own business as far as I could see, and at the moment wasn't attacking anyone. The Arab Legion troops, easily identified by their spear-tipped Kaiser Wilhelm helmets, and Palestinian police with their black woolen *kalpaks* also participated. Except for these trained soldiers and the Iraqis, Syrians, and Moustafa, the others were all rabble. They used short-range Sten-type guns to fire at objectives a mile away. I saw one fellow, wearing enormous baggy trousers, his head swathed in a turban, place his rifle on the wall, duck behind it, and fire straight into the horizon. He repeated the stunt till his ammunition gave out. Quite satisfied with himself, he shouldered his rifle and went home.

Moustafa chose this moment to ask me to take his picture. For five full minutes firing ceased along the barricade facing Mekor Hayim, while the Holy Warriors lined up for their pictures. It almost proved my undoing, because a little later, when I had temporarily lost sight of Moustafa, my exposed camera caused two Arabs in civilian dress to pounce on me and begin hauling me away. "Moustafa, Moustafa!" I yelled at the top of my voice. Moustafa emerged from the rear of a truck, where he was helping himself to cold lamb and bread

which had just been brought in. From then on I followed Moustafa like a shadow.

It was dusk when we decided to call it a day. Arabs usually retired from fighting after sundown, and expected the Jews to do the same. The Jews, however, did the opposite. The Haganah did its best work under cover of darkness. Sneaking unseen upon the enemy, it combined daring with the element of total surprise and usually succeeded in terrifying the Arabs. Another advantage of night attack was that the darkness hid the numbers of the woefully small—though superbly trained—Jewish units. Under these conditions events proved that one inspired Haganah commando was easily worth ten average Arabs.

This was true here too. For by nightfall the Jews had captured the strategic heights of Katamon and our Holy Warriors had clambered into trucks and rolled back to Deir Aboutor in the silence and gloom of defeat. Later, from Deir Aboutor, we heard the muffled blasting of Jewish sappers as they moved forward consolidating their positions. In the Monastery of St. Simeon, Jews found instructions in German as well as Arabic, a wholly reasonable discovery in view of Iraq's history during World War II. (See Chapter XXII).

The following morning Moustafa took me aside.

"Artour," he said. "You remember Hamid Sharkaf?"

I remembered Hamid Sharkaf. I knew him as John Kenny, a twenty-one-year-old boy from Glasgow, with red cheeks and an ever present smile. Before he deserted from the British army on the Arab promise of £15 a month, he had been attached to the Royal Engineers. His specialty was mine-laying and demolition-bomb-making; he also taught the Arabs how to use their British machine-guns. "Hamid Sharkaf" was the name he had taken among the Arabs, after the fashion of many of the British deserters.

"He is dead," Moustafa said, genuinely sorry.

"How did he die?"

"At Katamon. We killed him last night by mistake. He wouldn't retreat with the rest of our boys, so when the Jews chased him to our lines, we took him for a Jew and killed him."

"He was Catholic," I said. "Who buried him?"

"The Arab soldiers. They dug a grave in the Moslem cemetery by the Dome of the Rock, and the *imam* said a prayer."

So died—and so was buried—many a British soldier!

Moustafa went on to tell me of the unfair tactics the Jews had employed in capturing upper Katamon. The Jews had retreated from a strategic building, leading the Arabs into a completely booby-trapped house. A time-bomb had blown up Arabs engaged in peaceful sniping. Mines had gone off in the most unexpected places. Buildings had collapsed in mysterious explosions. The Arabs were complete strangers to this form of modern warfare. They learned while they died.

The Arab position had now badly deteriorated. The Haganah made new inroads into Katamon, and threatened seizure of Talpioth, another suburb which adjoined our own Deir Aboutor. Once in control of Talpioth, the Jews would be masters of the Bethlehem-Jerusalem road, and could force us down the steep embankment of Deir Aboutor into the Valley of Hinnom. We were virtually the only remaining Arab unit with a foothold anywhere in the New City.

To everyone's astonishment the Arabs were losing on nearly every front. Haifa, the leading port in the Middle East, with an Arab population of seventy thousand and a priceless oil refinery, had fallen to the Jews within thirty hours. Palestine's second port, Jaffa, an all-Arab city adjoining Tel Aviv, had crumbled into Jewish hands. Some fifty thousand Arabs had fled Jaffa.<sup>2</sup> Farther north, Safad, Tiberius, and the fortress city

<sup>2</sup> This flight-psychosis, which prevailed among the Arabs and ultimately resulted in the frantic exodus of many Moslems and Christians, is a difficult phenomenon to explain. It was a mass hysteria induced by poor morale and by fear of revenge and retribution for the Arab massacres and lootings from 1920 on.

Arab leaders—particularly in the Mufti's Arab Higher Committee—urged

of Acre—which even Napoleon could not capture from the Turks—had all been seized by the Haganah in a series of brilliant maneuvers. What innate power motivated these sons of David? I didn't yet have the answer from the Jewish side. But with the Arabs I had been learning some of the reasons why the *Jehad* was daily proving such a failure.

Moustafa, however, seemed to have no worries. Toward evening one day I found him sitting on a rock. I walked up quietly and sat beside him.

"Things are not going so well with us, Moustafa," I said.

"The Jews haven't tasted real Arab steel and lead yet," Moustafa said confidently. "Artour, you have seen only the work of untrained volunteers. You are making a mistake if you judge the power of the regular Arab armies from these Holy Warriors. What we are doing here is tiring the Jew, worrying

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residents to clear the fighting areas, promising them that Palestine would be cleared of Jews within thirty days after the Mandate ended. After the Jews had been pushed into the sea, Arab leaders said, Palestinians could return to their homes and at the same time share in Jewish booty. They implied that those who refused to leave were pro-Zionist; such people were threatened with reprisals.

In contrast, I know of instances where the Jews begged the Arabs, particularly the Christian elements, to remain, guaranteeing their safety and full respect for property. These Christians, however, joined the fleeing Moslems, fearing the promised retribution following the promised Arab victory. As an instance, the Armenians, who had always got along well with Arab and Jew alike, joined the panicky Moslems, horror-stricken by the memory of the Turkish massacres.

Wealthy merchants, physicians, bankers, politicians, and other leaders were the first to leave. Later came the poorer elements until, by the time the Mandate expired, those remaining were largely only the ill and aged, the looters, and the innocents.

The exodus figure of 750,000 or more Arabs is sheer propaganda, a fictional number that cannot be supported by the facts. The populace in the country from Jerusalem north to Jericho was not disturbed by the fighting, nor were the Arabs and Christians resident in the congested areas within the quadrangle formed by Ramallah, Tulkarm, Jenin, and Nablus—Palestinian territory now annexed by Jordan. It must also be pointed out that many of the Moslem so-called refugees were homeless, nomadic wanderers in the first place. Poor, nonrefugee Arabs, such as those in Gaza, have claimed refugee status in order to qualify for American aid.

him, keeping him running here and there until the armies of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and fighters from Yemen and Saudi Arabia and the Moslem countries of North Africa join the *Jihad*." He paused. "Then you will see slaughter, Artour. Then you will see us march to Tel Aviv."

"How long will it take us, Moustafa?"

"Thirty days—not thirty-one—but thirty days to conquer Tel Aviv!"

I wasn't too sure of this, but I said *insh'allah* anyway.

### I MEET THE PATRIARCH

IN THE midst of this growing turmoil, I had a personal problem. If, despite Moustafa's confidence in Allah, the forces of war should turn against us, what would I do with my suitcase, packed with my precious notes and the invaluable film record of my experiences so far? My suitcase was stored in our arsenal, where my bloodthirsty friend kept vigil; if the Jews forced us to flee, it would be lost. I decided the safest place for it would be the *Vank*, the Armenian monastery in the Old City, which was built like a fortress, and whose sanctity had always been respected.

One morning, therefore, I trudged over with it, gave it into the keeping of an Armenian family, and took the opportunity to pay my respects to the Patriarch, spiritual shepherd of some ten thousand Armenians in Palestine. I was ushered up a narrow flight of steps to his reception-room. It was large, rectangular, thickly carpeted, lined with upholstered chairs. On the walls were stately paintings and photographs of the princes of my church. Here one seemed to rise above the tumult outside and step into a calm and reverential world.

I faced Guregh II Israelian. He was a short man, wearing gold-rimmed glasses, with a long, patriarchal beard that was black in the upper portion, graying toward the tip, and com-

pletely white at the end. A large, pyramid-shaped black hood rose above his head, and at times seemed to overshadow him. It magnified both his face and stature, so that even while sitting he seemed a towering figure. His deep brown eyes, seemingly calm, glowed with dormant fire. Beloved by Jew, Arab, and Christian alike, he was one of the last of the old-time shepherds of the Church who guarded his flock with a paternal hand.

I bent over and kissed his hand, told him who I was, and explained that I had brought my suitcase to the monastery for safe-keeping.

"*Parov yegar, dughas*. Welcome, my son," he said. "You come at a bad time. It is a time of tragedy and bloodshed."

"I hope it will come to an end soon, Your Beatitude," I said.

He shook his head. "Passions are too deep, and the peacemakers . . . they talk, but do little else. Why could not Jerusalem have been spared? Why could not war have been kept away from the Holy City? Our properties outside the Old City are destroyed or seized; the income to support our church, our monastery, school, library, and the Armenian refugees who are streaming into the *Vank*, has been stopped. What are we to do? . . . Nobody knows what will happen after the British leave. We can only wait and pray."

An attendant brought in a tray of oriental candy and demitasse, and placed it on a mother-of-pearl table before me.

I heard a sudden commotion outside the door. A scout rushed in, breathless: a group of Arabs were trying to force their way into the monastery! Hurrying with the Patriarch to the window, we saw the Arab gang milling about the entrance, wild disorderly hoodlums armed to the bursting point. They were banging away at the iron door of the monastery with their rifles, screaming to be allowed entrance.

"They say they will shoot their way in," the scout reported.

"*Asdvadzim, Asdvadzim!*" My God, my God!" The Patriarch raised his hands in supplication. "*Assor vertchu tchika?*

*Amen orr, Amen orr gookan!*" Is there no end to this? Every day, every day they come!"

I heard the crack of a rifle shot, another, then a third. The Arabs were attempting to shoot out the lock.

From the posture of supplication, his arms raised heavenward, the Patriarch suddenly brought his hands together. He clenched them tight into two massive fists, then in a mighty rage of wrath he shook his fists at the hoodlums. And in that act of defiance he symbolized the defiance of the entire Armenian people toward the brutality of the Turk, the tyranny of the Nazis, the intrigues and betrayal of those who regarded us as weak and spineless because we were not of the Anglo-Saxon race and did not sit in the councils of the chosen. In the Patriarch I saw an Armenian people fighting its oppressors, its betrayers, its tormenters.

The Patriarch was no longer the disturbed cleric of a few minutes ago. He was a fighting man, in full command, the leader of his people, the guardian of his church. He wheeled around to the scout: "Go tell them that I forbid anybody to enter. They may try to shoot down the door if they wish, but as long as I am here they will not desecrate our holy *Vank*, they will not spill Armenian blood. *They will not enter!*"

I have seldom seen anyone, let alone a Patriarch, so enraged. There was little for me to do but stand by, fascinated, and watch the bolt of lightning smite the Arab. How could one help but admire this man of courage and fortitude? Surely our commanders at Musa Dagh must have been fighters of equal rank. . . . The storm was over. Into the palatial reception room there came again the calm of a sanctuary. "It's the lawless brigands who are the troublemakers," the Patriarch said to me. "The decent Arabs fear them, and that is one reason why most of them have fled from Jerusalem. If I let in one, a hundred will follow, then a thousand. They would plunder our *Vank*. . . ."

On that bitter note, I left him and returned to Deir Aboutor.

#### LAST DAYS OF THE MANDATE

ONLY a few days now remained until the British mandate over Palestine expired. Tension had reached the exploding point. The United Nations Trusteeship Council showed marked impotence. First, it proposed a truce, which neither side obeyed. Then it tried to postpone partition. There was a proposal to send United States Marines to enforce—no one was sure what. The Council suggested a special British High Commissioner to rule over Jerusalem. Later it thought a Red Cross official might do better. A dozen last-minute schemes and a hundred speeches were delivered in an atmosphere of great theatrical importance—but far removed from the reality in Palestine.

At Lake Success, Sir Alexander Cadogan, the British delegate, read a telegram to the Security Council stating that "all units of the Arab Legion had left Palestine for Trans-Jordan prior to the end of the Mandate." I smiled when I read this. For I had seen the Arab Legion in Gaza, in Hebron and in Katamon.

Far better than I, the defenders of Kfar Etzion had tasted the sting of Legion guns. They, too, knew the truth. . . . For weeks these settlers in their hilltop *kibbutzim* had beaten back assaults by the Arab Legion and guerrilla bands. At four a.m. on May 12—two days before the Mandate's end—guerrillas joined with Arabs from Hebron and the Arab Legion to launch an all-out attack on Kfar Etzion with two battalions and two thousand irregulars. They hammered at the isolated community and its 164 men and women defenders, with cannon, mortars, and heavy machine-guns. The tanks charged sixteen times, followed by wave after wave of howling fanatics. Kfar Etzion sent desperate calls: "Tanks penetrated our rear into the farmyard. . . . Overrunning the dining-room and children's house. . . . Swarming in from all sides." Ferocious



hand-to-hand fighting followed. When Kfar Etzion fell, the Arabs found sixty-two dead, forty-two gravely wounded, and three survivors. The rest had fled to the three adjoining *kibbutzim*—making a combined defensive force of about 350 Jews.

In the next few days these *kibbutzim*, too, underwent Kfar Etzion's fate. After their surrender they were plundered and burned. Thus ended the tragic saga of Kfar Etzion, the first major triumph of the British-trained, British-armed, British-led, so-called Arab Legion—while at Lake Success and in London, British spokesmen soberly repeated that the English and the Legion had pulled out of Palestine.

On the night of May 13, the last night of the British mandate—the night before the Jews would proclaim the establishment of the first independent Jewish State in two thousand years—I stood watching the burning buildings of Kfar Etzion glowering against the sky. The ravished settlement was symbolic of the Holy Land, a Holy City set afire by the torches of colonialism. I watched far into the night, then went downstairs and prepared for bed. Moustafa and I slept on adjoining cots. I lay on my cot. Moustafa was removing his jacket.

"I feel suddenly frightened, Moustafa. I cannot explain why."

"It is because you are afraid of the future. You will see that the Arabs will win. Allah is on our side."

"Do you still believe what you said about Tel Aviv?"

"Of course. Every Arab believes it. Every Arab knows that we will be in Tel Aviv one month from tomorrow. We will sit in the cafés by the sea, drink coffee . . . eat *baklava* and enjoy the Jewish girls!"

"And hang all the Haganah from the trees?"

"Yes, I am sure of it."

He paused for a moment, and grew confidential.

"Artour, I can now tell you our big plans, since they are not secret any more. The Egyptian armies have already crossed

into Palestine, and beginning tomorrow will march on Jerusalem and on Tel Aviv. The Arab Legion will march on Tel Aviv from the east and meet the Egyptians coming from the south. The Syrians and Lebanese armies will attack from the north and northwest, and march on Tel Aviv also. The Iraqi regulars will support the Syrians and Arab Legion. You can see"—and here Moustafa, quite excited, drew out a piece of paper and traced the plan roughly—"how the Arabs will come all together at one time on Tel Aviv!" He looked at me triumphantly. "Are you frightened now, Artour?" he said, blowing out the candle, and thumping into bed.

In the darkness I said: "No, Moustafa, I believe you."

I lay thinking. We were sleeping in the basement wing of Osborne House, sheltered from the fire that crisscrossed the Valley of Hinnom.<sup>3</sup> The shelling continued unbroken, to and from Zion Hill, David's Tower, Jaffa Gate, and beyond. It was marked by enormous explosions in the night. A few weeks to push the lowly Jews into the sea and seize the rich Jewish booty? Could 650,000 Jews defy the might of forty-five million Arabs, the massed might of the Arab armies? We were on a pinnacle of history this night: everywhere last-minute preparations were being made for tomorrow, the long-awaited day when hated British rule and the hated Mandate would end; tomorrow, when David would be smitten by the Arab Goliath.

I thought of the night I walked, rainsoaked, in New York. It seemed as though that had taken place in another world, in another time. I had come on this odyssey to learn, to see what forces were at work. . . . Here, in the Holy Land, where the Prince of Peace was born, violence spoke from every stone, every leaf, every ancient, time-hallowed site. . . .

And thinking these thoughts, I fell asleep, deaf at last to the bitter symphony of death played in the City of Peace.

<sup>3</sup> It was symbolic as a valley of death. An altar once stood here to Moloch, the god to whom infants were offered as sacrifice. The Alcadema Field of Blood was in this valley, as well as the potter's field of ancient days, bought with the thirty pieces of silver which Judas, in remorse, flung back at the priests.