My Brother Fawzi

Fathi Habashi

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Fawzi Habashi (1924-2019) was born in a Coptic family in Minya, Egypt and died on August 30 at his home in Hadayeq El Kobba, Cairo at the age of 95. His loving wife Soraya (1927-2017) died two years earlier. They have two sons and a daughter - - all of them are grand-parents at the time of his death.

In Secondary School in the 1940s, Fawzi found a purse with money in it. He delivered it to the officer in charge and as a result my father received a letter from the Principal Ahmed Helmy Mohamed praising the honesty of his son. Fawzi joined the English Club and prepared a discourse about “Dictatorship versus Democracy”. At that time the topic was very actual because the school was run dictatorially by the Principal and the world political atmosphere was nothing but dictators everywhere: in Spain, Italy, Japan, and Germany. At the end of the discourse the students in the “Dictators” side were much more than those on the “Democracy” side and so dictatorship won at the end.

In Secondary School time, Fawzi and myself revolted on the ceremonies that took place in the Christian Orthodox Church and used to go to the Evangelical Protestant Church. The Church had a club for young people and Fawzi became its Treasurer. He designed a metal sign that was fabricated and purchased by all members. The symbol was taken from the Bible “As arrows in
the hands of a giant so are the young children”. Together with the management of the club he prepared a picnic on the other side of the Nile which at that time was uninhabited mountain. We took a boat and there we spent the day eating and playing games. This was a memorable day and was a typical excursion at that time.

Renting a boat on the Nile

Fawzi standing to the extreme right and I am on the extreme left, 1940
The small Reda Ramzi [my uncle’s son] was received in Minya when my brothers and I took him for a promenade in the Municipal Garden. All passed away except myself. From left: brothers Fahim, Fayek, Fawzi, and Fathi.

In 1937 the family went to Cairo to visit the exhibition. In recent years a bridge was built connecting the eastern mountaineous part with Minya when it became populated.
**Cairo**

Time passed by and Fawzi went to the Faculty of Engineering at Fouad Al Awwal University in Cairo - the only university in Egypt [now called Cairo University]. It coincided with the return of our cousin Louis Awad from England who rented an apartment in Cairo and for economic reasons Fawzi stayed with him. One day Louis decided to sell his furniture and go to live in a pension [a room in a private house]. Fawzi was obliged to move to a small room for students in Giza near the University. In 1942, the university was closed due to riots of some students who cried in the streets “To us O Rommel” because the Germans under General Erwin Rommel were 40 kilometers from Alexandria and some of the population were pro-Nazi. Fawzi came to Minya till the university opened and he told us of this story. This incident precipitated the crisis of February 4 when the British High Commissioner went with tanks to the King’s Palace and ordered the King to bring Nahas Pasha to be Prime Minister.

At the University, Fawzi was in the Department of Architecture where his political views were developed. He was called “Habashov” by his colleagues because of his communist views. It was a turbulent political time in Egypt. Nobody was satisfied, at the university many students strikes, the problem of the World War II, etc.

We all moved to Shubra, Cairo in 1943. Fawzi had a great influence on me. I asked him many times to clarify and explain to me problems in algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and descriptive geometry. He did this with great understanding. At the university, he helped me greatly in engineering drawing and in projections. He was the one who influenced me to enter the newly created Industrial Chemistry Department at the Faculty of Engineering in Cairo. I was at that time hesitating between chemistry and geography. Since then, the Department changed name and became Chemical Engineering.

**Architect**

Fawzi graduated as a successful architect. He married our neighbor and distant relative Soraya who was also living in Shubra and we used to visit practically every night. He worked in the office of Sayyed Korraim who was professor at the university and Fawzi admired him very much because of his talents in architecture. One day, Fawzi received a paper money of 100 Egyptian pounds from a client because he designed for him a villa. He immediately bought a car with this money. It was Renault - the smallest car available on the market but was the first car in the family. We were all delighted with this small car.

**Political life**

Fawzi spent most of his life campaigning for freedom of individuals. He was arrested many times and at the end he wrote a book on his experience.
Fawzi during retirement

Fawzi’s book on his political life. He was arrested during the King’s regime as well as during the times of Nasser, Sadate, and Mobarak
Fawzi [with eye glasses], wife Soraya on his right, with their children, their wives, and their grand-children in 1992. Today [2019], all grand-children are married and have children

See also

https://www.recensio.net/rezensionen/zeitschriften/sehepunkte/11/10/prisoner-of-all-generations
https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fawzi_Habashi
https://search.library.utoronto.ca/details?7425990&uuid=3f6cb1df-1ddd-468b-805c-0d07754f3610