

POLITICS

The Death of Zaghlul Pasha and its Importance for Egypt.

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The Egyptian nationalist movement has sustained an irreplaceable loss by the death of **Zaghlul Pasha**. Saad Pasha Zaghlul (1860—1927. Chief dates of his life: 1882 participated in the revolution of Arabi Pasha, then entered the State service, became Minister of Education 1907, 1919 leader of the Egyptian delegation which demanded complete independence, 1921—1923 persecuted and exiled, 1924 Egyptian Prime Minister, 1925 leader of the coalition of all the Egyptian parties, 1926 President of the Egyptian Parliament), idolised by the Egyptian masses as the “Father of the Nation”, the founder and head of the largest Egyptian nationalist party, became especially in the last years the embodiment of the will to freedom of the country of the Nile oppressed by imperialism. All personalities of Egyptian political life had to submit to his authority, his leadership held together with firm hand a following consisting of all possible classes and strata of the Egyptian people and whose interests — landowners, and landholding peasants, employers and workers, — were diametrically opposed. Zaghlul Pasha knew how to concentrate the attention of the suppressed masses of Egypt on their deadly enemy, British imperialism, and placed himself at the head of this fight against this imperialism. The demand of “complete independence of Egypt” as a programme, combined with a number of outstanding personal qualities with the help of which Zaghlul knew how again and again to bewitch the masses, were the secret of his almost unbounded influence on the fate of Egypt.

Against the personality of Zaghlul all the means and tricks of British imperialism failed to achieve anything. The more he was persecuted and the more British propaganda attempted to slander and discredit him, the more his reputation grew in the eyes of the population and the more the entire national movement rendered him unconditional allegiance.

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that Saad Pasha Zaghlul really represented entirely the interests of the broad mass of the people who placed such great confidence in him. He was rather the representative of that class the beginning of the development of which occurred in Egypt at the time of the commencement of his career, and which to the extent to which it increased in strength and importance came more and more into fierce opposition to British imperialism. This class was the **Egyptian bourgeoisie**. This fact was to be recognised not only in the typical bourgeois nationalist demands which Zaghlul had inscribed on his flag, but it found expression before all during the short time when Zaghlul himself was at the helm: he suppressed with draconic means every expression of the labour movement, dissolved the trade unions and introduced laws for the protection of property and the bourgeois State apparatus. At the same time there was revealed precisely at that period — in the year 1924 — and with great clearness the limits of the revolutionary sincerity of the Egyptian bourgeoisie. Zaghlul Pasha concluded a Pact with the British bourgeoisie (represented at that time by Mac-

Donald), and if the imperialists had not been so obstinate there would undoubtedly have come about an alliance between the British and Egyptian bourgeoisie at the expense of the masses of the Egyptian people.

When with the coming into power of the **Baldwin** government the policy of England become one of brutally suppressing the national movement even in its bourgeois form (the British imperialists wanted the entire monopoly of the exploitation of the Sudan), Zaghul was again forced into opposition and was able to bring rapidly again under his power the masses who had become disappointed during his period of government. Since that time he aimed on the one hand at obtaining certain concessions from the English by "constitutional" means, without giving up the programme demands, and on the other hand at maintaining his influence over the masses.

For this purpose Zaghul Pasha created the **coalition of the three great parties**: the **Liberal-Constitutional Party**, which is openly in favour of "peaceable collaboration" with the British; the **Nationalist Party**, which recognises only revolutionary methods of struggle; and his own powerful **Wafd Party**, which has no clear programme except that which Zaghul Pasha embodied in himself. He succeeded by means of enormous efforts, and after he had overthrown the Zivar government which was directly in the service of the British, in manoeuvring between the contradictions which were becoming more and more acute. He would not permit anything which could lead to an open conflict with England, as an open conflict could have brought Parliament, in which the Zaghulists possess the great majority, and the Cabinet, which was actually ruled by Zaghul, in danger. But Zaghul Pasha regarded the "constitutional institutions" as a basis for a later fight for complete independence, or of a compromise with England.

He endeavoured to bridge over the antagonism between the various political parties. He did everything in order to set up as broad a platform as possible for the maintenance of the coalition and to cover the growing antagonistic interests within his own "Wafd" between the Left radical and the Right compromising wings. In order at the same time to blunt the class struggles which were becoming more and more acute (between the peasants and the landowners, and the workers and the capitalists), he attempted to carry out social economic reforms and to form nationalist peasants unions in the villages and labour unions in the towns.

In all these efforts he achieved only partial success. It came to a conflict with England (the question of army reform and the naval demonstration before Alexandria in May last), to growing antagonisms between the parties (temporary going over of the Watanists to the opposition, threats of a breach on the part of the Liberal-Constitutional Party), to strikes in industrial undertakings and the protest movements of the peasants. Everywhere the personality of Zaghul Pasha had to intervene in order to smooth over and to settle differences.

Now, after the death of Zaghul, the Egyptian national movement has no personality at its disposal which could take over this role. And the question of a successor to Zaghul is giving rise to a fierce conflict. Although the memory of Zaghul will undoubtedly continue for a long time to have effect, the fact that the numerous contradictions in Zaghul's work, which were determined by his connection with the bourgeois class, cause the conception of a Zaghulism to be unclear and confused, offers for various persons and groups the possibility of attaching Zaghul's label to their special interests.

These are the interests which will determine the further development of the nationalist movement in a much clearer form than was possible in Zaghul's time. Fight against imperialism, or compromise; united revolutionary mass party, or political cliques thrown together by personal connections; leading role to be played by the organised working masses, paying regard to the interests of the peasants, or hegemony of the bourgeoisie and domination of the landowners. These are the problems to which the national-revolutionary movement in Egypt must now give a clear answer.