

POLITICS

British Imperialism and the National Emancipation Struggle in Egypt.

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The situation created by the recent events is by no means of a temporary character, but signifies a new stage in the development of the nationalist movement.

Let us consider the events in their chronological order: Soon after the reopening of Parliament, **Zaglul** Pasha resigned on account of his differences with King Fuad of Egypt. This, of course, was only a pretext. The real reason for his resignation was the constantly growing power of the opposition and its attacks, which proved the incapability of Zaglul Pasha to fulfil the tasks which he—it is true, against his will—took upon himself, i. e. the solution of the **Sudan** question.

There is not the least doubt that Zaglul Pasha never seriously meant that the Sudan should be completely liberated from the clutches of the English, but he nevertheless expected certain concessions in this direction and—was completely disappointed. The King's Speech at the reopening of Parliament, as well as the speech of Zaglul Pasha at the official banquet rendered it clear that either something extraordinary must happen—or the whole policy of the Wafd (the leading party of the Egyptian nationalist movement), with all its "achievements", would go to the dogs. This something "extraordinary" was a sly and cunning calculation upon the feelings of the people, which did not fail to dip the scales in favour of the government party. The effect was really great. The resignation was refused by Parliament (95 per cent of which consisted of supporters of Zaglul), by the people and, in consequence thereof, by the terrified king. It is clear that the whole thing was a piece of cheap demagogy.

That was the situation before the recent and completely unexpected events. Zaglul and his Party were more than convinced that nothing would prevent them from retaining power firmly in their hands. But here there intervened one of the forgotten parties, who upset the whole game. It can be said that the new policy of Zaglul, after the victory over the opposition bore a very moderate character. It is a fact that he sought, and was morally prepared, for a very close understanding with the English government in order to relinquish the wearisome struggle under "honourable" conditions. The "**modus vivendi**", which was indirectly proposed to England, furnishes the best proof for the truth of this statement. It was a clear indication for the enemy that Zaglul was prepared to cease fire if he were allowed to retain his rifle. Then came the heavy blow. It was delivered at the right time and at the right place, and resulted in the complete crushing of the unfortunate recipient.

The murder of **General Lee Stack**, the English commander of the Egyptian army, was a splendid opportunity for some people. Of course, no one can prove that this murder had been prepared long before-hand. But when one compares the crime with the demands which England submitted immediately after the death of the general, the thing looks very suspicious. The demand for 300,000 feddans of land in Gesyra, and moreover the demand for the handing over of further land in the future deserves special attention. Equally interesting is the fact that Egypt is to abandon all resistance against the demand of England to control all foreign interests in this country; not to speak of the evacuation of the Sudan by the Egyptian military forces. Thus, the suspicion that in the murder of General Lee Stack we have a case of provocation on the part of English imperialism is only a logical conclusion from the whole situation.

The most remarkable fact is, that never in the history of the occupation of Egypt by England did the latter, even under the most favourable conditions, venture to demand what she is now demanding. This is due to the following two facts:

First, the constant decline of the leading Party of the Egyptian nationalist movement (Wafd). The Wafd, as an organisation which is more and more inclined to represent the interests of the middle city bourgeoisie, had not the power which it was supposed to possess. It is a fact that this Party, during the whole period of its apparently great activity, never succeeded in drawing into the struggle the most important factor in the country, the **peasantry**, as it had nothing to give them, in spite of all its talk of being the Party of the people.

Secondly, the extraordinary favourable situation which assured England that no other power would interfere in the Egyptian affairs. The present troubles of France in Morocco are the best guarantee for England that she has nothing to fear from this quarter.

The comical gesture with which the Egyptian parliament protested against the "unlawful" action of England to the League of Nations, England's vassal, was of course taken with stoical calm by British imperialism.

Are Zaglul and his Party already played out? By no means. There are a great number of questions of secondary importance upon which the Wafd will build up a new programme of action, which will serve to create considerable popularity for the Wafd. Among these questions are the following:

1) The question of the customs duties, in other words, fight against the practical control by England over exports and imports.

2) Fight against the high taxation of the young textile industry.

3) Limitation of privileges for foreign undertakings etc.

In order not to lose the confidence of the broad masses, the petty bourgeoisie and intellectuals, the Wafd must, of course, make use of some of its old slogans, but nevertheless very cautiously, as Zaglul says "moderation and constitutional legality."

What further development can be foreseen? Of course, if a general depression prevails, and even the extremest elements among the nationalists are terrorised by the undisguised brutality of English imperialism. Nevertheless it would be a great mistake to assume that the last word has been said. It is only a temporary calm which prevails, during which the social forces will be regrouped and more strongly consolidated, so that a new commencing struggle, which is unavoidable, will be conducted on new lines and with stronger means. A new force will arise—this will be the Egyptian peasantry, which has to fight for bare existence. If there is anybody who doubts this they should study the statistics regarding agriculture and the irrigation

the soil, and the question of the Gesyra district, which was expropriated by the English cotton planting syndicate of Sudan. These studies will clearly show that this is a question of life and death for the Egyptian peasantry, as this means that the soil of Egypt, the supply of water to which is already very short, is to be deprived of a great quantity of water.

The question now arises, who will take over the leadership of the peasantry. This is a question of the greatest importance. As regards the new government, it is not taken seriously either in Egypt or in England.

A few words must be said in conclusion regarding the **pects of the Egyptian labour movement in connection with the recent events.** The Confederation of Labour, which was set up by the Zaglul government after the cruel destruction of the revolutionary labour organisations, will now, of course, lose a great deal of its influence. It is now the task of the revolutionary elements to enter into this organisation and to reconstruct it in a revolutionary sense. There are at present some very influential unions, as the Union of the Suez Canal workers, the dock workers union and others, who hitherto have refrained from entering the "Confederation", because the latter is only a tool of the government of Zaglul. An agreement will certainly take place between these unions which will lead to a mass entry into the confederation, under the condition that its programme, as well as its tactics, shall be subject to a thorough revision.

With regard to the Communist Party, one of course cannot expect that any new government will be more favourably inclined towards its activity. The Party is sure to make the best use of this new situation as being the only Party which knows no compromise with English imperialism. At present the Party is engaged in restoring the destroyed local organisations and selecting an experienced leadership which will lead the Party and the working class of Egypt to the revolutionary struggle