

IN THE COLONIES

The Approaching Storm in Egypt.

By A b u s y a m.

Cairo, 2nd December 1924.

In Cairo the nationalists have shot the English General Lee Stack. General Lee Stack had come to Cairo in order to proceed from thence to the Sudan, where he was to act as a sort of commander of the new Sudan in its "independence".

Since the negotiations between Zaglul and MacDonal, which, as is known, did not achieve any result, the relations between England and Egypt became much more acute.

At the same time, however, the mistrust of the extreme nationalists regarding Zaglul greatly increased. Zaglul, the popular hero, at one time the recognised and sole leader of the Egyptian revolutionary movement, is still the embodiment of the revolutionary traditions, but is no longer the active leader in the fight for emancipation. The attempt upon the life of Zaglul in July 1924, the strengthening of the opposition in the Egyptian parliament, the growing hostile criticism of various newspapers — all this is the expression of the discontent of the Egyptian nationalists with the methods of conciliation employed by Zaglul recently in his policy towards England. The more Zaglul was inclined to compromise with England, the more radical and irreconcilable became the demands of the Nationalists, which may be briefly stated as follows:

1. Liberation of the Sudan and the setting up of an independent Egypto-Sudanese State.
2. Evacuation of Egypt by the English military forces.
3. Dismissal of all higher English officials from the Egyptian civil service.
4. Internationalisation of the Suez Canal.
5. Abolition of English control over Egyptian finances.

In order to placate the extreme nationalists, Zaglul Pasha attempted to wring at least apparent concessions from the English government. The English imperialists, however, who on their side had followed the development of the nationalist movement with the greatest attention, refused every concession, and on the other hand began serious preparations in order to meet the revolutionary danger which has arisen in Egypt.

Instead of liquidating the military occupation of Egypt, the English began, by degrees, to reinforce the army of occupation with fresh troops; the English fleet was concentrated in the Mediterranean; munition supplies were transported to the Sudan by land and sea. Along with this, the attitude of the British officials grew more domineering and insolent.

At the same time important political "reforms" were introduced. After the insurrectionary movement broke out prematurely,

as a result of English provocation, and was quickly nipped in the bud, it was intended, by the formation of a Sudanese state, along with the separation of the Sudan from Egypt, to create the basis for the continuation of the imperialist policy of England. An "independent", i. e., an English Sudan offers incalculable possibilities, not only for maintaining a constant economic control over the inhabitants of Egypt (through control of the Sources of the Nile), but also for creating, by means of energetic "propaganda" and bribery, a division between the population of the Sudan and of Egypt, instead of as hitherto, the two peoples working together to throw off the English yoke, which would arouse a fratricidal struggle between these two peoples in order to secure the undisturbed control over both by Great Britain. General Lee Stack, the English General of the Sudan, was to have had the chief task in this cunning game. What wonder therefore if the nationalists directed their weapons of vengeance against the man who had been sent to bring about bloody fratricidal war, misery, devastation, and finally, the complete enslavement of the Sudanese and of the Egyptian people.

There is no doubt that the English officials and military have consciously provoked the outburst of desperation which this murder implies. It was in a similar way, as the records of English colonial history show, that various provinces of India, South Africa, in fact in the last decade of the past century Egypt itself, was captured by the English. These tactics were once again employed successfully: Lord Allenby, a few hours after the assassination, handed the Egyptian government an ultimatum embracing seven points which contained, among others things, the following.

The Egyptian government shall place at the disposal of the English Sudanese government 30,000 feddans of land under cotton cultivation.

It orders the evacuation of the Sudan by all Egyptian soldiers and officers in this territory within 24 hours.

It grants the English officials who give up state posts in Egypt, double compensation.

It must see that no anti-English demonstrations take place.

The brutality of this ultimatum is unexampled in the history of predatory imperialism, even within recent years. The outrageous Austrian ultimatum to Serbia, and the ultimatum of Italy to Greece after the Janina murder failed to come up to this English note as regards its tone and the extent of its demands. It has been left to the iron logic of English reaction to find the connection between the death of Lee Stack and the handing over of 30,000 feddans of land to the English government. Even pro-English liberal papers are surprised at this step of Allenby, who openly makes use of the favourable opportunity in order to extort material benefits for the English bourgeoisie.

Zaglul Pasha did his utmost possible, right up to the last minute, in order to save the situation. He apologized most abjectly, ordered the arrest of not less than 160 persons among whom the murderer might be found, paid the demanded money indemnity and issued a prohibition of anti-English demonstrations. He rejected the remaining three demands.

This put an end to Zaglul's career as prime minister. The news of the Egyptian note in reply was received by parliament with the liveliest indignation. The item that, in accordance with Allenby's wish, anti-English demonstrations were forbidden, called forth a storm of discontent. Zaglul resigned, and king Fuad — true to his rôle as a marionette — appointed another ministry favourable to England under the "moderate" Sijud Pasha.

Allenby, however, went on undisturbed with his punitive measures. The Customs House of Alexandria was occupied by the military. English dreadnoughts and super-dreadnoughts appeared in the harbours of Alexandria and Port Said. Tantah, an important railway junction, was likewise occupied by British troops. The Egyptian troops in the Sudan were disarmed and 32,000 transported back to Egypt. The new Egyptian government was submissive to the British imperialists. The increased enslavement of Egypt is in full swing.