

The Fight against the Imperialist Feudal Block in Egypt.

By A b u s i a m (Cairo).

Three main periods can be distinguished in the development of the national movement in Egypt.

The first which includes a period of about 2 years, from the awakening of a national consciousness to about 1918, shows an internally homogeneous national movement with one single, central demand, that of the independence of Egypt and the Sudan. At that time the "National Party" (Watanists) under Mustapha Pasha Kemal was the only representative of the national movement.

In 1918 the leadership of the national movement passed into the hands of the Wafd with its leader Zaghlul Pasha. This was the period when class differentiations within the Egyptian national movement began to appear, and apart from the central demand for independence the individual parties already had certain economic and social-political programmes. In this period, political power passed temporarily into the hands of the national movement, as it is represented by the Wafd, and the upper strata of the Egyptian population, the great bankers and the feudalists, were forced to ally themselves closely with the imperial Power against the national movement in all its forms.

At the end of 1924 a new period in the Egyptian national movement began — its fight against the feudal imperialist Block, personified in the Ziwar Pasha Government.

In the months of March to November 1925, the fight between the national movement and Ziwar Pasha became more and more acute in spite of all persecution. The bourgeois party of the **Liberal Constitutionalists** who had long vacillated between an alliance with the national movement and with the imperialist feudal Block, was driven out of the Government and joined the Opposition. On November 21st 1925, the delegates of the Parliament which had been dispersed in March 1925, 99% of whom belonged to Opposition parties (**Watanists, Wafd and Liberal Constitutionalists**), met together and resolved on a common campaign against the Ziwar Government under the slogan: "**Fight for the Constitution!**"

Ziwar Pasha, by the advice of the English High Commissioner, thereupon tried to strike a first blow against the Opposition; he fabricated a new, unprecedented reactionary franchise law and wanted to give his Government a constitutional basis by means of an election bluff. The Opposition retorted by **boycotting the elections** — the slogan of the boycott was enthusiastically taken up throughout the country. Ziwar Pasha tried using means of terror. He handed over to the court the officials who refused to carry out the preparations for the election. The judges, especially in the provinces which are nationalistic to the core, acquitted the accused. In a few weeks it became clear that the elections would inevitably lead to a pitiful fiasco.

Ziwar Pasha, still under pressure from the English, then carried out a skilful retreat; a few days before the **National Congress** which had been fixed by the Opposition parties for February 19th 1926, the Ziwar Government declared its own franchise law to be invalid and put once more into force the law which had been enacted by **Zaghlul Pasha** and slightly modified by Ziwar Pasha in November 1924.

In this way Ziwar Pasha actually succeeded in breaking the brunt of the Opposition campaign. The **National Congress**, it is true, was attended by no less than 1200 delegates from all parts of Egypt, and the mood of those assembled was extremely belligerent, nay, even revolutionary. Three ultra-radical resolutions were passed which once more proclaimed the illegality of the Ziwar Government, the invalidity of its laws etc. and demanded its resignation.

At the fourth resolution however, which was to decide whether in view of the Government's concession with regard to the franchise law, to continue on the revolutionary path or to enter on the constitutional one of an election campaign, it transpired that the **Watanist group** (the uncompromising extreme **Nationalists**) was isolated and that the large majority of the Congress responded to **Zaghlul Pasha's** appeal to return to the constitutional path. The cunning **Zaghlul**, it is true, clothed his compliance in very revolutionary phrases, he spoke of a revolutionary victory of the Opposition, of concessions that had been extorted — but objectively **Zaghlul's** step means of course once more an evasion, it is the outcome of the fear of the petty bourgeoisie, represented by **Zaghlul Pasha**, of their anxiety to avoid decisive encounters.

The resolutions of the **National Congress**, however, have only **delayed the decisive fight**. For the time being, the strategic art of manoeuvring of the imperialist feudal Block saved the rule of the Egyptian court clique and of the English "adviser" from an acute revolutionary outbreak. The **coming election campaign**, however, will not fail to show the determination of the broad masses of the Egyptians to rid themselves finally of the egoistic bands of court-flunkeys, feudalists and bankers who are ruining the country, and of the imperialists who are backing them.