

# The Attack of British Imperialism upon Egypt.

By Observer (London).

The attack of British imperialism upon Egypt raises a great number of problems in all their acuteness. If we disregard those points of the ultimatum, the purpose of which is to humiliate the Egyptian government and brutally to manifest the power of British imperialism with regard to the whole East, we find before all three decisive points in the action of the British government: First, the further reduction of the independence of Egypt; secondly, the final annexation of the Sudan, and thirdly the unmistakable declaration to the other imperialist powers, before all to France and the United States of America, that they must not interfere with the imperialist policy of England.

The so-called independence of Egypt was established by that famous note of Lord Curzon to Lord Allenby of the 20th February 1922, which constituted an attempt to overcome the national revolutionary movement with the support of a section of the native bourgeoisie. Zaglul Pascha did not hesitate to cast communists and trade union leaders into prison. But nevertheless he was compelled, if he did not wish completely to undermine his own position, to express to a certain extent the national aspirations. He was only able to meet the opposition in his own Party by "opposing" those points which reduce independence to a farce. What sort of independence is it when British troops guard the Suez Canal and the whole of Egypt

against the "foreign enemy"? A mere piece of hypocrisy in order to justify the permanent occupation of Egypt. In addition to this, there are such impositions as the protection of foreigners and their interests, as well as of the national minorities, which has for a long time formed a special task of British imperialism, which is only exercising its benevolent activity in the interest of the "backward peoples". And then there is the Sudan, which in the hands of any great Power constitutes for Egypt a sword of Damocles. The British government has, without formally withdrawing its declaration of 1922, through the ultimatum and the steps which followed it, abolished the concessions it had granted. The Egyptian "government" is pledged to prevent demonstrations; while it will be rendered still more helpless by the taking over by the British authorities of the control of the customs in Alexandria.

The annexation of the Sudan, or more correctly said the expulsion of the Egyptians from this territory, is of still greater importance. The population of the Sudan are of course in love with British rule — at least so the imperialists say. Nevertheless this is contradicted by the fact that since 1899 the country has been under martial law. The fact is that the great Gezireh district is being opened up for the cultivation of cotton by the establishment of great irrigation works. This holds out the

prospect of enormous profits. Several million hectares of land are suitable for the cultivation of cotton. Not only this, but an unlimited supply of cheap labour power can be obtained; as the erection of huge dams will deprive Egypt of the waters of the Nile and whole districts will be converted into deserts, with the result that millions of Egyptian peasants will be driven to work as slaves for the Sudan Syndicate. British imperialism has taken advantage of the shooting of one of its servants in order to enforce the demands of the Syndicate for the extension of its area of cultivation in the Sudan. This is not a hypothetical problem, for within the next year or so the dams will already be erected in the blue waters of the Nile. According to the agreements with the Egyptian government, not more than 300,000 feddans of land, that is one tenth of the whole cultivated area, are to be placed under irrigation, as a greater consumption of water would already endanger the supply of water to Egypt. The Syndicate has the intention immediately to open up more than three times the area originally provided for. It is a well-known fact that, from Asquith to Curzon, the majority of the past and present English Ministers are personally interested in this lucrative business. Large loans have been granted to the syndicate by the coalition, the Conservative and the Labour government, which amount in all to over 10 million Pounds Sterling.

This magnificent plan of exploitation, which apart from general political reasons is the economic cause for the action of England, at the same time renders more acute the antagonisms between the imperialist powers. Italy is prepared to agree to the proceedings of the British government, in the expectation that in the approaching rivalries she will become a support of England and thereby be able to obtain something in return. France is openly alarmed. She fears the appetite of the stronger robber. It is proposed that this question shall be discussed at the League of Nations. Lord Curzon long ago informed the great powers that the English government would not permit any of the Powers to question or to discuss the special relations between England and Egypt. Every attempt in this direction would be regarded as an unfriendly act. What will France do? Mr. Chamberlain will visit Paris on his way to the Session of the League of Nations, and make it clear to the French Premier that the British government will not tolerate any interference. "Just behave reasonably and we can speak of the task and duties of France — in Spanish Morocco". It is possible that England will permit France a free hand in this territory. And the United States? The action of England is a cry: "Hands off this territory", which before all is addressed to the United States. The possibility of a huge production of cotton in the near future is a blow for the United States. The sharp attitude against all foreign interference, the setting up of a "Monroe doctrine", can very easily be extended to other areas, where the United States have great petroleum interests.

We are living in an era of "pacifism". Under the cloak of the pacifist phrases of the II. International the great imperialist countries are preparing a new world slaughter. The pacifist MacDonald prepared the way for the action of the present government. He broke off negotiations with the Egyptian government, he despatched a note which put that of Lord Curzon in the shade. In order to give the present government more time and to permit it to carry through all measures without criticism from Parliament, His Majesty's opposition, the Labour imperialists, have consented that the Foreign Office debate shall not take place before the 15th of December.

But these gentlemen forget the growing power of the East. The degradation of the Egyptian government to a mere tool of British imperialism can have no other result than to strengthen the revolutionary movement. The adjournment or dissolution of the Egyptian parliament will teach the population the necessity of revolutionary organisation, along with the application of revolutionary methods on a still larger scale. Not intimidation, but greater fighting spirit and increased bitterness will be the result throughout the whole East.

It must be the task of the Communist Party of Great Britain to tear the mask from the face of the hypocritical labour imperialists, and to mobilise the working class of England for the fight against them and against the policy of the government.