

THE EGYPTIAN COMMUNIST MOVEMENT
1920-1935

SOURCE OF INFORMATION-HISTORIC
GLANCE-

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMINTERN
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Writing about the history of the Egyptian Communist movement is a critical and strenuous task. This movement has usually been in secret. Its sources of information have been and still are difficult to obtain. They are sometimes rare to find. This study, in dealing mainly with the relationship between the Egyptian communist movement and the Comintern, will highlight the years that witnessed the beginning and the end of such a relationship, from 1923 to 1935.

It deems highly difficult to plunge into any details; thus, it suffices to make some references, that might guide the researcher in unfolding the facts of such history

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A-Sources

The first-class sources can be exhaustively cited as follows:

-Security Organ Archives

The Egyptian Security has never allowed any researcher, whether Egyptian or foreigner, to peruse its archives. This prohibition never stopped. The Egyptian Security System simply refuses to release any documents, however old...

The Egyptian Security possesses information on Marxist groups and cadres, that were in action at the end of the 19th century, yet it refuses its perusal till this very day. It even goes as far as denying the existence of such archives. Nevertheless, a limited type of these

Security reports were recognized, through scrutinizing the files of the communist movement cases. Such files contained security reports on the accused, their movements and their publications, as well as the structures of the communist movement organizations.

However the scientific investigation of such reports revealed an acute shortage in information, when compared to the actual events. Moreover, it included blatant errors, possibly due to the incorrect reports submitted by the Security, with the aim of passing the harshest punishments on the accused communists.

- Case Files

These " legal documents" include the verdicts issued by the prosecution against the accused in communism cases, ever since 1924 up to date.... the verdicts include the names and data of the accused: "Name-Age- Profession-Residence," as well as the type of charges and evidences. Reference to evidences is quite valuable, since it contains useful historic information. It usually presents copies of the seized publications, papers and reports... as well as the sayings of the accused... There are also the case files, which include the verbal mintes of the accused, and either sufficient summaries of the seized documents, or else their full contents..

There also exist the defence sheets, which refute the verdicts and review the party's stance and trends. Finally comes the legal preamble of such cases.

After a long and strenuous tracking process, we managed to compile a good number of such files..... Now, I possess the original copy of the first verdict issued in a communist case (1924), together with this case file and tens of similar cases.

Anyway, the Egyptian law Museum contains files on the most famous cases. It receives copies of some communist cases, whose files can be perused by academic researchers, upon obtaining special permission.

-Foreign Ministry Archives

The files of the Public Archive at the British Museum is full of reports, dispatched by the British Embassy in Cairo, upon the activities of the Egyptian communist movement

It seems that this activity aroused the interest of others, beside the British. The French Embassy correspondence and reports to the French Foreign Ministry also contain information of utmost importance about the communist activity in Egypt; so is the case with the reports of the American Embassy in Cairo.

There are also reports as those of the Foreign Relations Committee of the American Congress "Subsidiary

Committee No: 5" Such committee's reports are deposited at the American congress library.

Still, after a lengthy study of many of these reports, I warn that I detected incorrect data therein. This is attributable to the fact that their sources are directly connected to the Egyptian Security, which- in turn- possessed some-times faulty information

-The Egyptian-Communist Movement Archives

It can be stated that the Egyptian communist movement was keen ever since the beginning to possess its archives. yet, the latter were constantly subject to usurption by the security organs, or to their destruction by their proper owners under harsh security pressures..

However, there exists a semi-integrated archive of the Democratic Movement for the National Liberation "AL Haraka ALDimokratia LiL tahrar AL watany (HADITO)"

This archive is deposited in Paris at `Henri Curiel's Friends Society` (1)

I also managed, with effort to compile several documents and original copies of communist publications and reports. yet, what I gathered from veteran communists is but a drop in the ocean of issued publications, data and reports.

-Press

The vigor of the Egyptian communist movement was clearly reflected in the Egyptian press. The full statement of the Egyptian

Socialist Party programme` which later became the Egyptian Communist Party`-was published in Al Ahram newspaper in August 29,1921

A careful study of the Egyptian press throughout its history proved that lots of information can be obtained therefrom, although they mostly depend on Security reports. The journals published endless articles along the years, on communists expressing their viewpoints and others attacking them vehemently(2)

There were also several public papers released by Egyptian communists, without declaring that they are their mouthpiece...The history of the Egyptian Leftist press is an interesting chapter, rich in valuable history data and information on the trends, stances of the Egyptian communists.(3)

There is also the British press, particularly during the period from 1925 to 1927. I discovered tens of articles on the Egyptian communist movement. They reflect the interests and fears, prevailing among the occupation authorities, from the progressing Egyptian communist activity, during this period.

Moreover. There exists the international communist press, e.g.

The communist International

International Press correspondence

The Labour Monthly

Revoltyiony vostok(Revolutionary Orient)

Ofcourse they include very important information and articles on the Egyptian communist movement. Sometimes, the articles are by Egyptian communists, who review either their activities, or what confronts them from security, practical and theoretical problems.

- Parliament Proces- Verbal

The Egyptian House of Representatives often discussed topics or laws, pertaining to the Egyptian communist movement. One of the most heated discussions,with questions and answers was in 1927, when the Egyptian Authorities prohibited Sacla Tavalala, a communist

from an Indian origin, with a British nationality, and a member of the House of commons, from entering the Egyptian territories. (4)

Another occasion was the parliamantary discussion that took place during the issuance of the anti- communist legislations. Some people considered them a restriction on public freedoms

- Minutes of Discussion

Fortunately enough, I realised in due time the importance of taking down mintes of my discussions with several communists from different generations. I compiled 112 minutes, some of which were with communists, who witnessed the first surge of the communist movement (1921).... Such minutes were recorded. Many were even published. (5)

These mintes included rich information on the communist movement, its practices, its attitudes towards the various events and its relation to other powers. Some minutes concentrated on the relation between the Egyptian communist movement and the comintern.

An interview was held with two veteran communists, who studied in Moscow, at the Orient Toilers School the mintes of this interview held valuable information on this topic.

-MEMOIRS

Some Egyptian communists wrote down their memoirs. These were either published in separate books, or were handed personally to me, and I included them in my book "Thus the communists Spoke"..."HAKAZA TAKALAM AL Shiuoiuon.

Among the valuable books in this concern are. the book of Mahmoud Hosni ` Oraby (First secretary general of the Egyptian communist Party), entitled "89 Months in Exile" "Tisaa wa thamanon shahra Fi ALMA nfa"

and the book by Gilles Perrault, entitled "A Man Apart- the Life of Henri Curiel"

This book was issued in French, then was translated into English and Arabic.

- Books on the History of the communist Movement

Several books were issued on the history of the Egyptian movement, including:

- Dr. Abdel Wahab Bakr- Lights on the communist activity in Egypt (1921-1950)"Adwaa ALa ALnashaat AL shiuoi fi MISR"

There is also the study. I PREPARED "THE HISTORY OF THE Egyptian communist MOVEMENT."Tarikh AL Haraka AL shiuoeia AL misria".It is available in five volumes (4500 pages) The volumes include an integrated study of the history of the Egyptian communist movement, since..the embryonic stages of the early Marxism in Egypt during 1894 up till 1965. They also include two books on the history of public left- wing press,"tarikh Al sahfa Al yasaria" and another on the stance of the Egyptian communists from the Palestinian issue, entitled "The Egyptian Leftwing and the Palestinian Issue","AL yasar AL misry wa AL Kadia ALFilstinia" together with an English study entitled "The communist Movement in Egypt 1920-1988"(6). There are other studies that cannot be ignored, such as:

- Walter Laquer- Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East.
- M. Shafi Agwani- Communism in the Arab East.
- Selma Botman- The Rise of Egyptian communism
- Ivor Spector- The Soviet Union and the Muslim World.
- Beinin and lockman- workers on the Nile.

I hold many reservations on these writings, especially that the authors are foreigners to Egypt, and aliens to the movement. Thus, their writings displayed an orientalist touch, and held some false assumptions and incorrect information.

Still, they contained significant facts, and an honest effort has been exerted therein.

...With all these studies, the Egyptian communist movement has been privileged with a recording of its history, an unprecedented incident with other communist movements, either at the Arab level, or the Third world level.

The sources of getting acquainted with such a history are available, but mostly in the Arabic language. This renders their tackling restricted.

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B. Historic Glance

First of all, we should attempt-promptly-to understand Egypt.

Egypt that we are speaking of was occupied ever since 1882. It became occupied after a violent reigning crisis, that ended with a revolution, led by the Egyptian army and the multitudes, against the Khedive's reigning system. The latter was characterized by total corruption and a violent persecution of the Egyptians. The foreign communities enjoyed a wide influence. These communities increased astonishingly. Through their foreign privileges they exercised a steady pillage of the Egyptian wealth resources. They competed with their Egyptian peers unjustly and unevenly. Foreign tradesmen and professionals depended in their transactions with their Egyptian peers on the protection of consular courts. Such courts were biased to them, even against the Egyptian government and the Khedive himself.

This revolution, designated in the history of modern Egypt as the "Orabi Revolution", lasted for nearly a year. The revolutionists got hold of the government. Khedive Tewfik fled to Alexandria, where he remained under the protection of the English. He returned upon the defeat of the revolutionists by the English army, and the occupation of the country.

Since the revolution practised a series of social procedures, such as the confiscation of lands belonging to Turkish landlords, and the abolishment of their monopoly on irrigation water, as well as

dropping all usurers' debts, borrowed by peasants under the yoke of the crisis... thus the landlords pledged their alliance to the English against the revolutionists....

Thus, the first years of the Occupation witnessed an overt alliance between the English occupation and the landlords, whom Lord Cromer - the British High Commissioner in Egypt designated as "The true beneficiaries"

However, the Egyptian national movement was revived once more at the wake of the 20th century..A party was formed, which could be considered an embryo of the Egyptian national bourgeoisie, intellectuals, civil servants and tradesmen (The Egyptian National Party). Since these categories were economically weak, their party was also weak, and depended in its movement on pledging its alliance to external opponents of England. These were Turkey on one hand and France on the other. Thus, the successive strokes against the Ottoman caliph, followed by the bilateral agreement between Britain and France, intrigued the party. Some groups within the party resorted to individual terrorism. On the other hand, the English seized the opportunity of the breakout of the first world war to declare the British protection on Egypt, and exercise the harshest forms of oppression against the Egyptian adversaries.

.....However, this oppression was the launching point for one of the elements behind the congregation of Egyptians against the occupation.

Moreover, the landlords (basically cultivating cotton) attempted to free themselves from the English hegemony on their cotton crop, where the latter used to purchase it at the lowest prices. The intellectuals of this social stratum, and those of the middle classes in general, revolted against the foreign hegemony on all prominent positions in Egypt. Foreigners were blatantly distinguished, whether in wages or in influence.

The siege imposed on imports, due to the war, forced the occupation to allow the appearance of a limited Egyptian industry...

This flared a desire to control the national market. All these factors, preceded by the element of confronting the occupation by the Egyptian nationalism, accumulated in an expectation for the war to end.

After the war, it was only natural for the Egyptians to call for their independence and demand to attend the conciliation conference as an independent country... The English refused and arrested the movement leaders... banishing them to Malta, then to the Seychelles Islands consequently, the second national revolution, designated as the 1919 revolution, broke out.

The Marxist movement was not far from the basic content of this struggle.

It also emanated from a double enmity towards the occupation...

It opposed the occupation as a national issue, and opposed the foreign capitalists as a class issue.

Thus was the case from the very beginning

Since the organized Marxist Action was launched in secret, therefore it is difficult to record its history at the primary stage. The first thread of this organized activity can be traced down with certitude to the police arrest of a Greek, while distributing a pamphlet in March 18, 1894, urging the workers to celebrate the Paris Commune Anniversary. It contained the following:

" Lo..Workers! Remember that this day is in memory of the commune uprising in Paris, so let us- we poor Supressed workers- stand hand in hand, and cheer out loud:

Down with the tyrant rich!

Long Live the Social Revolution!

Long Live Communism!"(7)

The archives of the Royal Palace contain a message by the Khedive's keeper of the seal, written in this same year, and addressed to the prime minister, expressing the Khedive's concern about "The increasing activity of the Italian International group in Alex"(8)

Thus, we have traced two threads already, a greek one and an Italian. There are many more, including the Russian. The name Joseph Rosenthal stands prominent. A Security report about his activity in Egypt includes the following.

"Here is a memo of the information we gathered on Joseph Rosenthal:

- In 1910: The interest of the Security Organ was aroused by the above-mentioned, being an anarchic and fanatic, who spreads provocative instigations among the local Jews. (Till then, the Security Organ described socialists using the term anarchic)

-In 1913. his name was prominent in the case of the Russian Adamovitch nihilist

- In 1916: A report form the Refugee Affairs Administration, accusing him of instigating troubles among the lines of Russian Jews.

-In November 1918: During the peace celebrations he hoisted the Socialist flag- a red patch with two hands shaking , on its middle.

-In July 7,1920: In his capacity as Head of the Tenants Union, he organized a twenty four hour strike, in demonstration against the high shop rentals.

-In July 16,1920: A report from the Alexandria police acknowledged that the above-mentioned arranged a strike among tailors, and proclaimed his socialist trends.

He also participated in organizing a strike among workers at barbers' shops.

-In August 31,1920 The Alexandria police commandant reported the following: Rosenthal is a notorious anarchic he is politically dangerous and is on the 'A' black list . He is known to be blatant in expressing his political views. He is involved in all Union movements in Alexandria. We can say that he is a revolutionary Socialist, and possesses communism- oriented ideas. (9)

Actually, the Russian socialists played an active role during their presence in Egypt.

Rosenstein (of a Russian Origin) was Editor-in Chief of the English edition of the Egyptian National Party Journal (A radically anti-occupation party opposing the English- occupation). He released a worthy academic study, upon the economic role of the occupation in Egypt, entitled " Ruin of Egypt."From his service file at the Soviet Foreign Ministry we derive the following information:

"Rosenstein" was born in 1871 in Boltava Ukania

-He was one of the popular front group, until he was seeked for arrest in 1890. He then immigrated to London where he studied Marxism and joined the British Socialist Movement.

- In 1901 he joined the Russian Democratic Socialist Party. He met Lenin in 1902, during their mutual stay in London.

- In 1906 he travelled to Egypt.

-In 1920 he returned to the Soviet Union, where he was appointed minister plenipotentiary in Tehran up till 1922. He then returned to work in the Soviet Foreign Ministry.

- In 1939 he became a member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences

- He died in 1953

In Alexandria, there was also a group of sailors from the armed cruiser Bottomkin, who fled after the failure of the 1905 Revolution . It was noticed that during the great demonstration, organized by the Egyptian workers against the widespread unemployment in Alexandria, under the slogan " We need either jobs or bread", a group of foreigners stepped in the demonstration, carrying a sign with "We back the demonstrating workers". "The cell of the Russian Democratic Socialist Party (Bolshevik) in Alexandria"

Kropiskaya's letters (Lenin's wife secretary of Iskra's editorship staff) indicate that the editons of Iskra magazine, printed during the period March to August 1902 in Leipzig, were dispatched to Batumi Port in Russia, through a long journey. It started in Leipzig, then passed through Berlin, then Br'indisi Port in Italy. and finally to Alexandria for storage (I searched for this site and discovered that Iskra was stored in a warehouse, belonging to Spastopole Restaurant

in Alexandria.

The restaurant was owned by a Bolshevik Russian named Joseph Yozyovovitch). It remained in store until the arrival of a stoker on a Russian ship, who was known as Vyrystosky (his real name, was found to be Trytikov. In September, 1902.the Egyptian police seized a few Iskra editions, before their transfer to the Russian ship "Borgom". Trytikov reached Russia to inform that Alexandria has become a dangerous city, due to the alertness of the police, and the activeness of the Russian counsl. (10)

Moreover, this group issued a Russian magazine entitled "Maryak", i.e. the "sailor". It used to be printed in secret, in a Russian press at Helwan near Cairo. From there it was dispatched to Alexandria, to be distributed on the sailors of the Russian ships passing by.

...Actually. the foreign presence was intense in Egypt.

Foreigners enjoyed lots of of immunities, attributable to their foreign privileges. The majority of them were labourers Most of them worked in cigarette factories and small workshops,Owned by foreign tailors, shoemakers, carpenters or mechanics, or else held supervisory jobs in tram-, water- and gaz companies, or in governmental authorities, such as the post, railroad...etc. and small bourgeois craftsmen.

The wake of the century witnessed an extensive activity, both revolutionary and social, among the different Italian, Greek, Armenian and Russian communities.

Organized party groups came into existence.

They were mostly affiliated to the main party in the mother country. The greeks organized several literary and political societies, that participated in serving this party activity.

One of the Greek communists states in his memoirs that he wrote upon my request, the following. "The Greek Marxist group lived within the care of the greek cultural life. It established the Greek Popular Book House, as well as a number of salons. Malanos, the owner of a famous bookshop in Alexandria, released a collection of

poems, Costantinaos Pyridis was one of the renowned poets of modern greek...They were all communists, (11)

The Italian Socialists were also active in Egypt, to the extent that Lord Lloyd said" the Italian Socialist Party was as active in Egypt (at the wake of the century) as it was in Italy"(12)

The Italian Socialists established the `Liberal Popular University` in Alexandria, to educate the workers...Moreover, both the Security reports and the press observed the formation of a number of political societies and clubs, involving a socialist activity, eg.Groupe d'etudes sociales the latter was highly active in 1919the security Organs refer to it as,`belonging to the third International Stances`(13)

The `clarte` group was also established, which was an extension of the activities of similar groups in France.

But the socialist activity was not isolated from Egyptians.

Since the 80`s of the nineteenth century,several writings on socialism appeared...These included Shebly Shmail's (a Lebanese living in Egypt) and other writings in `Al Moaid` magazine, which was released by an intellectual Azhar graduate-sheikh Aly Youssef.

In 1907,a pamphlet was distributed in Cairo, undersigned by the `National Party youth`, `urging the Egyptians to study socialism and take an interest in it`.

Many books were released on Socialism... Following the failure of the 1905 Revolution in Russia, Khalil Sa'ada issued a book in Egypt entitled` "the Secret of the Russian Revolution"."Asrar AL thawra ALrousia". Salama Moussa issued his book"Socialism"."ALishtrakia" Moustafa Hassanein Mansouri issued a book entitled` the History of Socialist Doctrines` TARikh AL mazahib ALishtrakia" this book, issued in 1915, was the first Egyptian study, built solely and wholly on the theory of Marxism... Its conclusion contained a programme, that can be considered the first formula for Egyptian Socialism.. this programme was quite flexible. It concentrated mainly on the national issue and objected vehemently to the occupation and

1915

foreign privileges.

It called for democracy, and went as far as `demanding a progressive tax income, one the latter surpassed L.E 300 per annum, It requested a law that sets a threshold on profits, not to exceed 5%.It demanded a maximum rental on agricultural lands. It requested-that foreign employers would be obliged to engage Egyptians, to cover at least half the number of their employees. (14)

We should dwell upon some crucial ideas of this Marxist intellectual.. He possessed very special concepts at a very early stage. Probably his concepts reveal how the Egyptian community always tended to distinguish the Egyptian reality and identify itself with it..., without being restricted to general trends, that some adopted as unified patterns, following, them blindly..

Mansouri speaks about the communist Manifesto, saying `It is the oldest programme, set for socialist parties. Reference is made to it, concerning some matters, although some of its principles have become obsolete`(15)

He proceeds, saying "It is wrong to imagine that Socialism has fixed principles, that can neither be amended nor modified, and that its advocates are unified in form and concept, throughout the world. They do agree upon one aspired objective, but they differ in their means of achieving such objective, according to the different governments and the prevalent social systems within their countries.(16)

... This motive, behind the distinction and attachment to the local reality, characterized the Egyptian communists, and even entailed many problems in their relationship with the comintern, later on.

The break out of the 1917 Revolution promptly affected Egypt, in the form of an extended growth of socialist aggregations

Marcel Colombe states that `the 1917 Russian Revolution, and the summons of the third international in the following year to (the peasants and labourers of the far East) and to (the Muslims throughout the world, who are victims of exploitation), left quite an

impact in the greater centres, particularly in Alexandria, being an international city.

When the 1919 National Revolution flared up, the

Egyptian Socialists played a major role therein. The revolutionary bourgeois leadership adopted a green flag, with a crescent and three stars (an emblem of the three religions) Socialists adopted a red flag instead. Both Flags were hoisted together, side by side, for a long time.....(17)

However, the socialist activity alarmed the exiled leaders of the Revolution, to the extent that Sa`ad Zaghloul secretly addressed the leadership of Al Wafd Party within the country, saying: "we do not approve of the pamphlets, that express the Egyptians` reliance on the Germans, or their alliance to the Bolshevik. Such pamphlets are being used against us by our enemy, to prove that our movement is connected to either the Germans or the Bolshevik movement"(18)

Journals issued in English in Egypt (all pro- occupation) launched a campaign against the so-called Bolshevik danger.(19)

This campaign progressed illogically, to the extent that General Wilson, the British Invasion Troops Leader in Caucasia, dispatched a report to his government, advising an immediate withdrawal from the occupied Caucasian territories, in order to bolster the necessary powers, needed to defend more important regions of the Empire, particularly Egypt and India. The latter were considered subject to the Bolshevik danger threats. (20)

Probably the occupation forces intentionally exaggerated upon the presence and activity of the so-called Egyptian Bolsheviks, to justify their occupation of Egypt, lest it should fall into the former`s hands.

One of the founders of the Egyptian Socialist Party said "maybe this is the worst time to form such a party, as we are in a political dilemma, that need not be aggravated, by giving our opponents in England the pretext to say that there exists in Egypt is necessary to stand against communists and Bolshevik" (21)

Another exaggeration was the statement that Egyptian peasants established independent Soviets prior to the 1919 Revolution. Actually they simply proclaimed their mutiny in five towns, and separated themselves for a while from the central authority. This was due to pure national feelings, and in an attempt to create pivots for anti-colonization actions. Leaders of such independent towns adopted no social procedures towards expropriation or proprietors, except in rare and individual cases.

Thus, since 1917 the Marxist aggregations became closer and more active, seeking to establish a socialist party... An element of conflict emerged from the very first day. Egypt is an occupied territory.

Egyptians are quite sensitive towards foreign occupation and foreigners in general, who enjoyed special privileges, on the account of the Egyptians.

Although the buds of socialist actions sprouted among foreign communities, yet the Egyptians insisted that the prominent and leading element in the socialist party would be Egyptians and only Egyptians ... this way the socialists avoided the mistake of other parties, such as those of North Africa. They categorically refused the intrusion of foreigners upon the party leadership, under the pretext of internationalism..

The Egyptian Socialist Party was promulgated in August 28, 1921. Its formation statement was signed by four Egyptians. Furthermore, in spite of the great number of foreign residents in Egypt, who joined the party, yet its founders insisted on not including any of them among the party's leadership... Thus they kept it as a pure Egyptian party... Later, this led to some conflicts with Comintern delegates.

We notice also something of great significance the Egyptian Communist Party was a Marxist party in the wider sense of the word. It included (although it was promulgated several years after the Bolshevik Revolution) numerous democratic socialists, as well as Fabians and Left-wing Hegelians the party Founders, sought to

include everyone in the leadership, and to create equilibrium among the four leaders of the party namely. Hosney Oraby (communist). Salama Moussa (Fabian)- Dr. Aly `Anany (Left-wing Hegelian)-Mohamed Abdallah `Anan (Second socialist International)

This was clearly reflected on the programme that included principal articles on the national issue (liberating Egypt from colonization- the people's right in self- determination).

Another article called for the "elimination of any form of human exploitation by some groups, and the abrogation of any class distinction, where human rights are concerned"

The programme requested the "unification of natural wealth general production resources of the country as a whole, followed by a fair distribution of their outcomes on all workers, while stopping any capitalistic competition" Still, it never casted any nationalization emblems or property confiscation slogans(22)

However, the promulgation of a socialist party in Egypt did not pass peacefully. As soon as "Al Ahram" published its programme and names of its founders, many journals rose and accused it of disturbing the national unity, in the face of occupation.... and of instigating class conflicts within a society, where capitalism has just emerged.

Even "Al Louaa" , the most radically anti-colonization journal) wrote the following:"This party's job will be to instigate trouble between employers and employees, till the occasion arises for it to re-distribute properties on everyone.(23)

Another writer on Al Ahram pages summons the socialists to immigrate to the Bolshevik country. to enjoy "hunger and extremism"(24)

Moreover, a religious futwa (legal opinion), issued by the Islamic sheikh of Istanbul (constantinople), was published and widely promulgated. It stated that "the Islamic religion contains fundamental rules that contradict all socialist procedures"(25)

The London Times (!) demanded another futwa, the grand Mufti of

Egypt issues such a futwa, stating that "the method the Bolsheviki group destroys the celestial laws, particularly the Islamic Law "Shari`a"(26)

We notice that most of this aggression preceded the promulgation of the party. Still, the Egyptian socialists went forth with it.

However, once the party was formed, dissention among its leaders arose. Conflict was mainly upon how much and how far the Bolsheviki concept for Marxism was abided to, and consequently, how far and how strong was the relationship with the soviet State and the comintern.

One of the famous intellectual party member withdraws and refuses the idea of joining the third International...Thus, Al Ahram publishes an article by Salama Moussa, stating that "in Vienna, Austria`s capital, there exists now an international called" the International union for socialist Parties ". It was formed in 1920 from parties, that refused to accept the 21 conditions of the third International. It is in the interest of the Egyptian socialist Party to goin the Vienna International, that Joining the Third International would be a deviation from socialism, and the acceptance of a revolution,as a legitimate means of acquiring it. He,who ever attempts to merge the Egyptian Socialist Party in the third International, is only deceiving the members of this party, who joined it as a mere socialist party"

He proceeds, saying "our devotion to Egypt should surpass our devotion to socialism, since our liberty is our foremost objective then follows socialism'.(27)

Moderate members continued to withdraw.. and the Bolsheviks controlled the party.

However.. inspite of these difficulties, we can say that the party found a sound ground for action.

Naturally, the newborn party attempted to find supports among the working class, that had just emerged from the battles of the national revolution (1919), in which it proved its efficiency,

competence and combatting powers...

Soon the " general Trades Union" was established under the leadership of the communists. It is said that the members ranged from 20,000 to 25,000...

Walter Laquer states that the Egyptian trades Union, presided by the communists, joined the International Trades Union by the end of 1922. (28)

The correspondent of the Labour Monthly journal in Cairo states that "the trades union, presided by the communists till 1923-1924, was well on its way to become a true popular movement..."

The Egyptian socialist Party inserted the revolutionary tradeunionist traditions. It concentrated the trades union to be true schools for the workers` economic struggle. Organized labor strikes under the leadership of trade unionists and party members became unexpectedly widespread...

The party founded the tradition of celebrating the 1st of May. For many years, such celebrations were well-organized and resembled splendid carnivals. The union urged the workers not to work on their day, inspite of the employers` protests (29) The communists also introduced the "red fund" tradition, to collect donations for the support of the workers going on strikes.

The Party`s activity extended to the rural areas through workers. Many modern industrial centres were peripheral to rural areas. Most workers came from the countryside, and even dwelt in their villages near the factory sites. Thus the Egyptian countryside started getting acquainted with socialism...

In 1922 the Party released its document, entitled "A Summons to the Manual and Mental workers ". It urged the workers and intellectuals to infiltrate the countryside, in order to create a unified political and economic front, that is capable of confronting the bourgeois influence.(30)

The party issued a moderate and flexible programme for the sake of the farmers` issue. It included the following:

- Organizing the destitute farmers in syndicates, and establishing relations between them and the trades union, and going as far as linking them to the International Farmers Syndicates.

- Abolishing debts on farmers, who own less than 30 feddans
- Exempting farmers, who own less than 10 feddans, from any taxes.
- Imposing taxes on irrigation water, for those who own over 100 feddans.
- Establishing cooperative banks for small farmers.

The program further requested "a proper representation of workers and poor farmers within the Parliament".

The Party also established important relations with the intellectuals...

In short, we can say that an adequate basis was established for the launching of a significant socialist movement in Egypt. As for membership, figures can be estimated in comparison to the other parties...

The following table illustrates such a comparison. It is taken from an official information source.

NO. OF communist Party Members(31)

Country	NO OF Members in 1922	NO of Members in 1924
Egypt	-----	700
Palestine	-----	100
China	-----	800
Turkey	-----	600

The figure is high according to all criteria, especially when compared to China or Turkey and Palestine... It deems necessary to refer to another estimate of the membership number, made by the Egyptian Security. The considerations and particulars of the verdict, issued from the Alexandria criminal court, in which the central

committee members of the party were judged in 1924, ascertained that the party members mounted to 1500. (32)

Undoubtedly such an extensive activity did upset the Egyptian bourgeoisie, to which the power was handed (during the influence of the occupation)

This reached the extent that during the drawing up of the 1923 constitution, the ghost of the communism danger haunted the committee in charge of drafting the constitution articles.

Thus, it stipulated more than once in the constitution's explanatory memorandum for necessity to protect the social system from the danger of communism.

The government, which had dispatched two officers at the wake of the century to be trained in the tsarist Russia on the hands of the "ukhrana" (the tsarist secret police), soon sent other officers to be trained in Scotland yard on the means of combatting communism(33)

The authorities, aiming to destroy the party, grasped the opportunity of the labour strike surge in Alexandria, which was organized by the party, in demand for the workers' protection against arbitrary dismissal.. thus, the authorities could hit at last.

Actually, the strike surge in February 1924 was so well-organized and extensive that it instigated fear among the ruling class... Factory employers dismissed workers on strike and engaged others. The party addressed the workers, urging them "to strike while their hands are upon the plough", i.e. to strike while occupying the factories. The red flags were hoisted... the climate was set to proclaim that the communists got hold of the factories.

A wide propaganda campaign against the party was launched. Al Ahram wrote: "The socialist movement impregnated with communism has erupted within the past few days. Thus, the government was initiated to tackle it and attempt to suppress it, even with an armed force". The newspaper demanded that "The government eliminates the communism danger before it aggravates, particularly that the government relates the labour movement that

emerged in Alexandria in February 23... to the instigation of the Egyptian communist Party... Thus, it decided to eradicate such a movement. (34)

Sa'ad Zaghloul, leader of the 1919 Revolution, and the wellbeloved popular leader and prime minister at that time, plunges into this struggle. He openly addresses the workers on strike, saying "If you respect other people's property and voluntarily quit your posts, you shall be duely treated as honest abiders to the law and faithfuls to your country. If you seize other people's property, you shall be treated as usurpers` (35)

The Party is aware of a real danger, especially that newspapers in England frequently mention the dispatch of two armed naval units to Alexandria port, under the pretext of safeguarding the foreign subjects against the imminent communism revolution..

The party decided to terminate the strikes... and thus, the strike was over.

It is astonishing that the party actually governed the strike movement, to the extent that the Alexandria Head of police stated in court- during the trial of the communist party leaders, that "the workers followed the advice of Mr Antoine Maroon (a party leader and legal consultant of the trades union) and his comrades." He further stated that "it was not an easy job for the Police to evacuate the factory from the workers, but a single word from Mr. Antoine sufficed to terminate their occupation there' (36)

.... Although the strikes terminated, still the ruling class and its backing British occupation, realized that the communist party was becoming intolerable... thus, on the afternoon of March 3,1924 the security forces closed down the communist party sites everywhere, arresting tens of party leaders, and all its central committee members. They also shut down all the trades union offices... A resolution was issued, dissolving the Egyptian communist Party and the trades union, and confiscating its sites, documents, properties, as well as punishing anyone affiliated to it...

Since March 1924 up to date, the Egyptian communist Party is only active in secret.

Party leaders were put on trial. Many were sentenced to a three year imprisonment...Antoine Maroon (lawyer) abstained from eating, and died as a martyr in request for the rights of political prisoners, of which he was deprived.

The machine of terrorism and aggression started grinding harshly the communist party.. Antagonistic campaigns were launched against the party...All syndicates were requested to issue statements in newspapers, renouncing communism. Otherwise they would be dissolved..Instead of the communist party leading the trades union, the government imposed several other bourgeois leaderships, which divided the union's movement. Each one headed a division . Among these, were Edgar Gallad Pascha (a palace man). Abdel Rahman Fahmy Bey (a wafdist leader), the noble Abbas Halim (a prince)...etc.

Nevertheless, the, communists proceeded in secret In October 6,1924, when the verdict of imprisonment was issued against the party leaders, in defiance to governmental terrorism, a secret central committee was formed by the party, in an attempt to learn underground procedures. In March 6,1925 the party released a public journal "Al Hesab". (although it did not officially announce its affiliation to the party, yet it was actually released by it). The Editor-in-chief was a member of the new central committee. "Rafik Gabbour" The journal called for the formation of a new party, under the name of "the Labourers and Farmers Party". Naturally, this party made no reference to "communism" since the latter had become legally prohibited. The party simply called for socialism and the rights of labourers and farmers... Moreover, the party prepared an election programme, requesting the nominees (in the 1925 Parliament elections) to adhere to, and support anyone who adopts this programme...

Secret pamphlets ebbed...Al Ahram declared that a secret pamphlet was distributed lately, indicating that the communist

movement still existed within the country" (37)

The party formed a series of clubs and groups, through which it could infiltrate among the people..In the 1925 elections, it constituted a committee, entitled "the Defence committee for the Rights of Labourers and Farmers". In Alexandria, It established a marine club". One of the security reports indicates that this club was an active centre for the comintern in Egypt(38)

The first of May, 1925, was an occasion in which the "role of the party was prominent once more among the lines of the working class" celebrations extended from cairo (the tram trade union) to Alexandria and Port Said, where the workers marched in a procession led by celebrating music. (39)

Once more the police strikes at the party, and Al Hesab magazine is closed down, its property confiscated and a large number of the party leaders are arrested and imprisoned.

It might deem necessary to refer to the fact that the indictment issued in this case, including the names of the accused, contained the names of seven foreigners from among thirteen.

Those seven are:

-Constantan Vies - born in Austria (Security investigations proved that he was a commintern representative, residing in Egypt).

-Shallom Bolok- born in Russia

-Leon Alkonin- born in Russia

-Ridal Hoshlik- born in Boulogne

-Charlotte Rosenthal- born in Alexandria (daughter of the aforementioned Joseph Rosenthal, who is of a Russian origin)

-Siklaridis Yanakakis- born in Greece

-Aron Weinberg- born in Russia

The other six are Egyptians

This phenomenon shows that the party, which failed during the short period since its formation to establish sufficient Egyptian cadres, and which endured atrocious police compaigns, was forced to relinquish its first approach, namely the removal of foreigners from

among its leadership.

Following the arrest of all the central committee members, who were all Egyptians, the party was obliged to resort to Foreign cadres within its leadership... This ultimately led to Further direct interference of the comintern in the party's affairs...

The government is overcome by a hysterical surge of combating communism. It issues a resolution, prohibiting the permission of books, papers and magazines tackling communism. It went as far as prohibiting a member of the British House of commons from visiting Egypt, because of his being a communist. Russian ships were notpermitted to enter Egyptian ports

Nevertheless, the communists proceeded with their activities.. regardless of the Security pressures, regardless of their own mistakes, and regardless of the faults imposed by their relationship with the comintern.

* * * * *

C- Relationship with the comintern

It deems wrongfull to compaire the relationship between the Egyptian communist party and the comintern, with the European relationship. The factors differ, so do the criteria and indicators. Not only are they different, but also conflicting.

Egyptian workers, who were deprived of their rights, whose coercion was doubled due to their exploitation and the imposed foreign privileges, could not be simply led to moderation...

Moreover, Egypt was emerging from a vehement national revolution, in which the workers and Leftists played a major role, they experience, within its framework, severe forms of revolutionary violence.... Thus,Egypt was ready for the Soviet pattern...

The Egyptian socialists, who were viciously attacked by men of religion, the occupation, and the local reactionists, felt the need to

enforce themselves through "the International Proletariat", and by the revolutionary fortress, represented by the Soviet Union. In spite of that, the tendency to relate to the present and to reject general mottoes imposed everywhere, was prominent. There was also the fear from foreign elements among the party, lest the latter should seem like a foreign agent

Any way, contradiction prevailed among the lines of the Egyptian communist party, ever since its formation in 1921.

Although the founders insisted on eliminating foreigners from the leadership (at least the declared one), in spite of their extended vision on socialism-as a doctrine, and their being accepted among the party lines and within the leadership- whether Fabians, leftist Hegelians, or second International socialists- yet, their strong affiliation to the International Proletariat Movement led them- step by step- towards the pressure of the comintern. Consequently, they relinquished their extended vision. They proceeded slowly towards the comintern realm... according to the comintern rules.

This matter created violent struggles within the party lines.

While "moderation" prevailed at the party head-quarters in Cairo, yet "relentless Marxists" dominated the party branch in Alexandria.

Dispute pivoted around "the issue of proclaiming adherence to the comintern and proclaiming the party's communism".

In July 3, 1922, the party held its first congress, It was no mere coincidence that the congress was held in Alexandria. It took place in secret, and the results were immediately announced.

A party leader published an article in Al Ahram, stating that "in July 30, a congress was held at Alexandria, attended by representatives from the party branches, all over the country, including a delegate from the Cairo committee members. A decision was unanimously adopted to make the Alexandria branch the party's administrative centre. Another decision was taken by the majority of voices, which was the adoption of the communism Ideology. The party's central committee was elected during this congress.(40)

Consequently, Salama Moussa withdrew, so did a large number of the moderates. Still, some remained and a compromise was reached, concerning the party's name.

The conference decided to keep on the party's name "The Egyptian Socialist Party" ,after inserting the term "the Egyptian Division of the International communism". Upon such a compromise, some moderates remained on...

Even such a compromise does not escape the attack of the press. Al Ahram comments "we are confronting the Bolshevism in its full sense, particularly that the party has decided to join the third International (41)

However, the party proceeds in its path. It dispatches its secretary general, Mohmoud Hosny `Oraby, to Moscow, with a request to officially join the comintern. From Moscow, Oraby publishes articles in the Egyptian papers, entitled "Red Russia" The papers speak about his activities during the fourth conference of the comintern.

They publish paragraphs from his speech in the conference, in which he says "we hope one day despite the opposing English colonization and the Egyptian capitalism, to see the red flags hoisted up the pyramids" He proceeds, saying "the Egyptian party covered vast steps ahead. It will participate in the coming elections, after setting `a farmer`s program"(42)

In November, while Hosni "Oraby was in Moscow, the party released a statement, calling for the celebration of, the Russian Revolution Anniversary and the emanation of the Dawn of Freedom".(43)

At the inauguration, the party members sang the International anthem. The curtains were then drawn to uncover a statue, designated "the shackled Freedom".It represented a worker, breaking the chains off freedom, setting it free from the captivity of capitalists... Many speeches were delivered the celebration ended with the International anthem. (44).

All this occurred, while Hosni Oraby was struggling in Moscow to obtain his party's membership within the comintern... He was faced by many obstacles. A committee was formed to examine his request, together with all the documents and statements in his possession. The committee's reporter was comrade Katayama (Japan)...

Due to the importance of the report, which was issued by the committee, and known as the katayama Report, and due to its decisive and effective role- not only in the history of the relationship between the Egyptian party and the comintern, but also in the history of the Egyptian communist Movement, we thereby cite it;

"Dear comrades:

The Egyptian Issue committee convened several times and listened to the Egyptian socialist Party report. The issue was extensively discussed. We realize that Egypt occupies a significant position.

On one hand, it separates the Orient from the Occident. On the other, it links between them both. It is the key to the East and Far East.

Thus, the Egyptian communist Movement is very significant.

The Egyptian people have suffered over 40 years from the yoke of the French and English exploiting colonization. One of the outcomes of the last war was that Egyptians have altered their stance. They revolted against the English colonization. While it suffices the small Egyptian bourgeois and capitalists to obtain nominal independence for their country, the revolutionary communists and workers refuse such an independence they seek a genuine one. Considering their stance in this issue, they merit the comintern's support. We, the Egyptian Issue committee, agreed upon the fact that the communist Movement in Egypt should be supported and encouraged. The establishment of a communist movement in Egypt is essential, in order to control the access to the East and Far East.

In case mutiny arises in India, Egypt-with its geographical position- could control the way for the Indian revolution, and

support it by closing down the Suez canal. Thus, we are keen on helping the Egyptian communist movement, and on acknowledging the Egyptian Socialist Party is which considered newborn. It still lacks experience in many aspects, although the Egyptian comrades have fallen into the comintern's steps. still, we would like to stipulate some conditions for their admittance to the comintern...Thus, we decided to present you with the following resolution.

Resolution issued by the Egyptian Issue committee, concerning the Egyptian socialist Party, in November 26, 1922.

1- The Egyptian socialist party delegate's report, which we were allowed to peruse, is sufficient evidence that the Egyptian Socialist Party represents a vehement revolutionary movement following the approach of the communist International.

2- Nevertheless, the committee proposes to postpone the admittance of the Egyptian Socialist Party in the third International, untill:

(a) The party expels some unfavourable element.

(b) A congress is held, where any communist element in Egypt, outside Egyptian communist Party, and accept the 21 conditions of the communist International,would join the party.

(c) The Party changes its name to the Egyptian communist Party.

3- Therefore, the committee entrusts the Egyptian Socialist Party with the task of holding a congress in the near future, with the aim of accomplishing the above -mentioned prerequisites this should not exceed January 15,1923. (45)

The resolution is clearly sharp in tone.

However, the resolution was obliging the party to do what it was attempting to evade, in order to comply with the actual circumstances of a country like Egypt. It was obliging it to accept any communist element in Egypt among its lines.. The expression is clear. It did not say any Egyptian communist element. Thus, it opened the door to all foreign residents in Egypt, to join the party. This was at a time, when the party was striving to adhere to the national

issue, and was fighting against the privileges enjoyed by foreigners, while mobilizing the Egyptian patriots towards this end.

It was obliging the party to change its name to the communist Party...

It was imposing on it the principle of accepting interference in its internal affairs, by forcing it to expel some of its members.

And all this had to be accomplished before January 15, 1923.

The International press correspondence magazine, by publishing the resolution in its edition of January 5, 1923, placed the Party in an embarrassing situation. It could no longer call for a congress in secret, and declare it later, as before. Thus, it sought the government's permission to hold a conference. The latter refused. Consequently, it attempted to hold the congress in secret. It succeeded with great difficulty. The outcome of this congress was the withdrawal of the remaining moderates, and the full approval of the resolution, issued by katayama's committee.

* * * *

Concerning the relation with the comintern, we shall cite some quick remarks:

* The Party dispatched a group of its cadres to Moscow, in order to study at the "University of the Orient Toilers" They were shocked and upset by the fact that all the responsables for the Arabic Department within the University were foreigners and against Arabs, in general, and Egyptians, in particular. The Egyptians were a group of broad-minded and trained unionists. They held the slogan "Arabizatsya" at school, i.e. arabization of the Arab party department leadership at the University. Consequently, the department head, "Abou Zyam", ajew of a Russian origin, launched a violent attack against the Egyptian delegates...

In a dialogue that I conducted with one of these students, he said that "we were about 12 Egyptian students. The department staff from administrators, translators and political officials. were all Jews. We declared that such a formation is inconsistent with the

nature of the Arab countries. We, Egyptians, were keen to learn the Russian language quickly. We soon realized that the translators, who were weak in the Arabic language, performed bad translations of the lectures... We struggled and held slogans for "Arabizitsya", i.e. Arabization; but we were violently attacked. We were put on trial at the University, under the pretext that we are racists and anti-Semitic.

Unfortunately, we were opposed by all Arab students. We lost the battle of Arabization`

"During our trial, I spoke out loud and denied the anti-semitic accusations. I said, we Egyptians, are semitic. I used to speak about arabization as a vital battle for the mobilization of all Arabs in their combat against colonization. I was backed by some Egyptian students, including Abdel Rahman fadl, and Abdel Aziz Mar`ei. We expressed our viewpoints with astonishing courage and clarity, which aroused the interest of the attendants...."

The trial ended with the suspension of the Egyptian students for one whole year, to work in a factory, to acquire the proletarian ethics "but they left us for nearly three and a half years at these factories". We only returned to our studies, after great insistence"(46)

The Egyptian students returned from the Orient toilers University, carrying several negative observances. They were all subject to flagrantly wrongful security and administrative procedures, during the process of sending them back home. This placed them in extremely critical situations , ..especially that some of them lost their Egyptian nationality during their stay in Moscow. This entailed strict procedures for their return.

I need not conceal that all the students, with whom I conversed, suspected that the flagrant and intended shortcomings in the procedures of their return, were in vengeance for their stance at the University .

Most of them returned to resume their combat among the lines of

the Egyptian communist party..

* The second remark is the dispute that erupted between the party and its secretary general, Mahmoud Hosni `Oraby, upon his release from jail. The party accused him of having moderate tendencies, and of changing his mind, where communism is concerned, in order to gain the party`s pulicness. On the other hand, he made painful remarks on the procedures adopted against him in person and against the party, by the comintern representatives staying in Egypt. He expressed how they impose thier unacceptable instructions and orders.. He even requested a withdrawl from the comintern.(47)

Thus, Hosni Oraby resigned, leaving the post of secretary general unoccupied.

Strangely enough, the comintern imposed a new secretary general on the party, through its representatives in Egypt. This was "Mohamed Abdel Aziz" who later on was discovered to be a security agent.

We can realize the damage and destruction that befell the party, which was working in secret, yet continuously assaulted by the police, while its secretary general was a police agent. It is said that this person was imposed by Constantin Vice, who lived in Egypt, under the pretext of being a correspondent of the labour Monthly magazine. It seems that the latter was impulsive in his decisions, or else liable to form wrong opinions on the Egyptians whom he contacted, because of his being a foreigner. Another incident is related by a Security agent in one of his books. He states how he came to know Vice: "he spoke to me long in English. He criticized colonization, capitalism and the pathetic state of the Egyptian workers and farmers. We kept in touch. I got acquainted with many of his friends. They were English, Greeks, French, Syrians and Egyptians. Most of them were intellectuals. He furnished me with several labour pamphlets"(48)

The resultant of Vice`s actions was a new surge of arrests, in which many party cadres were seized.(49)

Actually, the comintern dispatched several representatives to work in Egypt. It seems that many of them were closely observed by the police.. upon information furnished by the secretary general, Abdel Aziz.

Walter Laquer refers to Ignaz Semenyuk, an American who set up a Russian-Tturistic company in Egypt in 1925, and to Alexei Vasiliev, who established the textile Import commercial Agency in 1927. Both of them exerted an effort in activating the party. However, the former was banished in 1928, and the latter in 1929'(50)

according to security reports: German sources indicate that a certain Hugo Rudolf, a German communist, arrived in Egypt in 1925, to promote the communism action in Egypt.

He opened a textile factory in Alexandria, and lived there until 1929. Then he returned to Moscow, where he worked as a comintern representative.

Other security reports refer to more names of comintern representatives. In a document filed at the British General Archives, we read that "ever since 1926,40 communists are under police observation, including comintern representatives, namely Max kogeil and Elliahou Teper."(51)

Another document states that "since 16/4/1924, the so-called Andriev is under observation, being a comintern agent"(52)

We do not wish to say that all these representatives played a negative role. Some of them offered real good experiences, and respected the Egyptian status. Others played a harmful role...

Moreover, the documents of the 5th comintern conference refer to complaints by some parties against the comintern`s Executive committee. The latter seems to receive inaccurate information through unsound channels, from the organiztional poient of view.(53)

* The third remark can be inserted under the title Ideological Dictation, where inappropriate ideas and stances were imposed on the party, although they are inconsistent with the actual situation.

In 1925, Stalin spoke on the issue of "colonies". He stated that they can be divided into three sections, emphasizing the necessity to deal with each one with a different approach. "In a country like Egypt and China (second degree colonies), the communists should seek to establish a revolutionary block of small bourgeois and workers"(54)

...There is a big difference between a wide national front seeking national independence and freedom from occupational seizure, and a revolutionary block... In Egypt, the matter required the summon of a large national front. The most urgent issue was to get rid of the occupational forces and authorities. Still the matter did not stop at that.. In China conflict occurred between the communist party and the comintang. So the 6 th comintern conference declared that the Chinese bourgeoisie has finally shifted to the antagonistic revolutionary camp... Automatically, the Egyptian communists, who were China`s partners, according to Stalin`s description (second degree colonies) were inforced to consider that all the Egyptian bourgeoisie has finally shifted to the antagonistic revolutionay camp. This was not true.. The Wafd Party (the principal bourgeois party) still possessed liberal national powers, that could neither be denied nor ignored.

However, the Egyptian communist Party, under pressure, launched a battle against the Wafd Party. But Wafd was backed by the majority of Egyptians.... This isolated the party tremendously.

Still, we have to acknowledge that the Egyptian communist party did not easily surrender. represented by Haidar one the leaders of the communist party of palistine It addressed the 6 th comintern conference with a report "expressing its belief that the national bourgeoisie in Egypt has not finally shifted to the antagonistic revolutionary camp, as was the case with the comintag" Furthermore "some comrades imagine that the revolutionary role assumed by the wafd party has ended, and that now it has become an anti-revolutionary power and has identified itself with such a power.

Thus, no alliance can exist with it...

Still, comrades, by severing our relation with the Wafd, we are shifting to the other extreme, thus committing a grave and serious mistake".

.....As usual, the Egyptian communists attempted to reach a compromise. They demanded "to specify our duties in Egypt as follows:

No declaration of alliance with the Wafd Party.

No formation of any joint organization with it, but it is inevitable to maintain a constant communication with the Wafd and its bases, to carry out specific joint activities.(55)

But when was it even possible to reach a compromise with the comintern?... Particularly on an issue that has been already contemplated and settled by Stalin. Thus, the Egyptian communist Party led lost battles against the Wafd Party, that ended in its further isolation...

It suffices to cite these three remarks..

However, we refer to the fact that these adverse situations reflected on a new programme, that was released by the Party in 1931-a categorical year... During that year, Egypt was suffering under the yoke of a dictatorship, which abrogated the constitution and assaulted all its political opponents, especially the Wafd Party... In this climate, the Egyptian communist party released its most extremist programme... a programme demanding "the establishment of a Soviet government for the workers and farmers.

- The free confiscation of all lands, cattle, agricultural machinery owned by imperialists, landlords, the king, bureaucrats and the wakf (It should be noted that the wakf belonged to the Islamic system) (56)

- The nationalization of all irrigation projects

- The confiscation and nationalization of banks and industrial establishments owned by imperialists.

- Alliance with both the Soviet Union and the proletariat

Revolutionary Movement.(57).

(Among these factors is the aggressive campaign launched by the antagonistic information system where the Egyptian communists were accused of being mere commintern agents. This campaign reached its climax with the issuance of a monarchic decree denaturalizing eight Egyptian members within the Egyptian communist Party, who were currently studying in the Soviet Union. This was with the pretext that they have become agents of a foe country...

This eventually led some people to feel that their relation with the commintern, besides being a political burden (with what it imposes on the party from false political tendencies), has become a dangerous legal burden, that threatens them to the extent of losing their Egyptian nationality)(58)

However, the Egyptian communist Party, with its historic setup, could not stand such harshness for long. Moreover, the above-mentioned remarks, together with other factors, accumulated to overshadow the relationship between the Party and the comintern...

Thus, inspite of the fact that the Egyptian communist party proceeded with its combat, under strenuous circumstances, while its cells operated under the police violent assaults, yet it managed with great difficulty to get rid of the secretary general, Abdel Aziz, who was a police agent.

It even attempted with difficulty to change its political line, in accordance with the real situation and developments in Egypt

Still the damage that befell the party was great...

After mentioning in the documents of the 6 th comintern conference (1928) that "the Egyptian communist Party is playing a prominent role in the National liberation Movement, and is depending upon the Proletariat in its organization, and the syndicates that include Egyptian workers are its source of its front row leaderships,"(59) We notice that a following document states that "the police hascontrolled some unfundamental groups within the

Egyptian communist Party, and is operating through them to break up the party thus, we can describe the Egyptian party as being inactive"(60)

....In 1935,a new edition of the Soviet Encyclopedia was released. The name of the Egyptian communist Party was dropped from the list of communist parties in the world..

This expressed the international non acknowledgement of the party.

Still, the party proceeded, inspite of everything.. the 1940's arrived to witness a vital communist movement, full of life and vigorous revolutionary actions. Yet, it was neither connected to the comintern nor to the International... this probably affected its formulation, tendencies and conceptions to a great extent.

Inspite of that some kind of relations with commentern continued also the party proceeded its struggle, inspite of everything

In an attempt to proceed with the surveillance of the kind of relation- which was gradually dwindling- between the Egyptian communist Party and the commintern...

We can refer to two vitally important articles published in the "Revolutionivostik"magazine-"the Revolutionary East"- issued in Moscow in 1932, under the title "A message from Egypt", signed by A. Gibally, which is evidently a pseudonym.

It is astonishing that the first article entitled "No way out"and dated Nov. 1928 was published in the 1932 issue, while the second article entitled "The garrulous party" dated May 1929, was published in the 1932 issue. This illustrates the difficulty of communication between the Egyptian communists, and the commintern..

Another astonishing point is the harsh leftist temperament dominating these two articles. It suffices to make reference to a paragraph in one of them, emphasising that..."the working class is the only actual opponent to the Imperialistic hegemony in Egypt".

The communist party proceeded with its activity and relation with the commintern amidst great difficulties... If we resort once

more to the British documents, we shall find in the "annual report submitted by the British Embassy to the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the year 1933" a whole paragraph entitled "A report on communism in Egypt during 1933". This paragraph includes vital information, such as "The commintern attempts to re-establish the communist activity. Within the arsenal workshops in Cairo, the communist activity was launched by an important agent, namely Salem Youssef, whose real name was Wahib Al Malik, while in the railway warehouses there existed another person, namely Hussein Al Kharat, whose real name was Aly Hassanein. They both studied in Moscow and returned secretly to Egypt. Al Kharat attempted to set up a communist cell among the warehouse workers. He used to deliver lectures on the Marxism theory to the workers.

In June 1934, the police arrested 22 workers, after propagating communist publications in a number of factories".(61)

If we follow up the Egyptian newspapers, we shall always read news on the arrest of communist cells and Egyptian "agents" of the commintern.. In May 20, 1935, a group of communist workers were put on trial before the Penal (criminal) court of Cairo. The group included Mohammed Wahib Al Malik, Aly Hassan Hassanein (both studied in Soviet Union and secretly returned to Egypt under different names), Mahmoud Al Sayed Aly and Mohammed Aly (both later became prominent leaders of the printing workers during the 40's)(62)

A month later, the papers published other news on the trial of a number of communist workers, who were accused of propagating communist publications (63)

In 1937 we read the following piece of news in Al Ahram newspaper "The Penal court of Tanta (a city in the middle of Delta) looked into the communist case in a secret session. After listening to the witnesses and reviewing the seized publications, it became evident that Aziz Abdel Malik Nairooz, the first accused has travelled in secret to the Soviet Union in 1927, where he settled for

some time .Later, he returned to Egypt secretly and settled in Mehalla Al kobra (a centre of textile industry in the middle of Delta). The second, third and fourth accused- Mohammed Abdel wahab, Moustafa Ismail Hafez and Moustafa Al Harrag, participated in propagating communism amidst the textile workers in Mehalla Al Kobra"(64)

It seems that the relation between the Egyptian communist Party and the commintern existed through new channels... inspite of the removal of the Egyptian communist Party from the Soviet encyclopedia...

In 1935 comrade Spano, a leader of the Italian communist Party came to settle in Egypt after having been persecuted by the fascists.... Through the Italian communists (who were highly active in Egypt thence, in a widespread campaign against the Itlian fascists, who also existed among the Italian community in Egypt) comrade Spano contacted the Egyptian communist Party and prepared a report on its activity"

Comrade Spano's report (available at the Archives of the central committee for the Italian communist Party) offers a highly significant image of the activites undertaken by the Egyptian comrades.

It deems necessary to refer- even shortly- to some contents of this report "taking into consideration that this report was written in a manner that protected these comrades, who carried out activties amidst great security measures"

-An activity at Ismailia within the Suez canal co. and an attempt to establish an Esperanto school.

-A widespread activity to establish "L.I.S.C.A" (the French abbreviation for the committee combatting anti- Semitism), including 1200 member

-Party cells in Cairo, Alexandria, Zakazik, Suez and Port said.

-Several comrades occupying prominent leading positions in popular organizations, such as:

- Peace committee Secretary at Zakazik
- Railroad Syndicate Secretary at Zakazik
- Bus drivers cooperative Society secretary
- A member of the Party's central committee simultaneously assuming a leading role in Al Wafd Party
- Another member was also member of the Trades Union central committee".

At that time, foreign elements increased within the communist movement. They leaned on their foreign privileges. They were even encouraged on behalf of the British occupation authorities, which found it appropriate to allow anti-fascist democratic activities, particularly that fascists exercised great activities in Egypt amidst the huge Italian community (170,000). They succeeded in establishing close relationships with king Farouk and some of his entourage (kamel Bindari Pasha, Aly Maher Pasha, Sheik Maraghy)

Simultaneously, forms of democratic activities aggravated, especially in the domain of defending the international peace and combatting anti-semitism. Popular congregations attempted to gather volunteers in order to fight among the lines of the Spanish republicans.

Undoubtedly, this created certain channels for relations that could be considered international

* * *

we had set a time barrier to stop with this paper at the edge of the year 1935, where the Egyptian communist party alienation or even expel from the comintern occurred...

But I shall surpass several years to embark on one of the outcomes of such an alienation and overshadowing which prevailed on the international relations of the Egyptian communist Party.

In the year 1952, the July Revolution brokeout... All the communist parties all over the world, especially the Soviet communist Party, condemned it. It was considered as a pro-American military coup.

They asserted that this expressed a contradiction between the

English colonization and the American one... But the Egyptian communists held a different opinion. They ever experienced a different practical incident altogether. Their officers participated in the formation of the Liberal officers Organization. Among the nine members of the Revolutionary leadership council, two were communists... Thus, it was only natural that the Egyptian communists would fully endorse the July Revolution, which presented an anti-colonial movement.

Everyone was dumbfounded in front of this stance, in which the Egyptian communists challenged the International communist Movement as a whole... Strangely enough, the Egyptians considered the matter quite normal, and proclaimed that they are the advocates of their issue. Consequently, no other party, no matter what, has the right to discuss the Egyptian affairs...

These are the same shadows and settlements that accumulated along the years of sufferance under the unhealthy relationships with the comintern...

We can state that the Egyptian communists never altered their stance...

TÜRKİYE SOSYAL TARİHİ
TÜSTEV ARKİVLERİ
TÜRKİYE SOSYAL TARİHİ
TÜSTEV ARKİVLERİ

(1) Henri curiel is one of the founders of the second surge of the Egyptian communist movement. He participated in establishing the Democratic Movement for National Liberation D.M.N.L. Curiel was banished from Egypt in 1950, with the pretext that he is not Egyptian, his colleagues kept corresponding with him and supplying him with publications and internal reports.

When Curiel was assassinated in Paris in May 4, 1978, his colleagues took hold of all his documents and reports, which he received from Cairo, as well as his correspondences with Cairo. They formed a group designated "Henri curiel's Friends society" they keep this archive in Paris.

Reference should be made to the fact that a few weeks prior to the death of Henri curiel, a French magazine published a violent article , accusing him of being an old agent of the Soviets , and that he is organizing for them an espionage network all over Europe...

After his assassination, an anonymous person contacted the French news agency and informed it of the assassination of a "soviet agent " However, this same agency received other phonecalls, referring to other reasons for his assassination.

(2) Naturally, the periods, in which the communists could overtly express their ideas and concepts, were limited, and depended on the prevalence of a liberal atmosphere within the society. Once such an atmosphere ceased to exist, these periods ended.

(3) For further details: refer to Dr. Rifa`at sa`id- History of the Egyptian leftist press (two books re-published in one volume) Dar Al Amal- cairo-1987.

(4) Proce`s verbal of the 22 nd session for the House of representatives in January 25, 1927.

(5) An important number of minutes were published in:

Dr. Rifaat said. History of the Egyptian communist Movement- Svolumes "tarikh Al Haraka Al shioeia Al misria"

- Dr. Rifa`at sa`id- Thus the communists spoke- Dar AL Amal-cairo (1989)."Hakaza takalam Al shiuaiuon"

(6) Tarek Ismail and Rifa`at sa`id- The communist Movement in Egypt- Syracuse University Press (1990).

(7) Al Hilal- April 1894.

(8) National Documentary House (cairo). File 81.

(9) An English report submitted by Y. Clayton- deputy manager of the Public security Administration in the Egyptian Ministry of Interior. The report was submitted to Mackington on sept.28,1921 (deposited at the public archives of the British Foreign Ministry)

(10) Lenin`s letters and those of Iskra`s editorship staff to the party organizations in Russia From 1900 to 1903 (3 volumes) Moscow (in Russian) (1969) Letter n 146 p. 185

(11) Nicola Paparidotti- Petit Resume` du Mouvement GRE`C EN Egypt. (a 52 page document-written upon my request)

(12) Lord LLOYD.Egypt since crommer P. 353

(13) F.O.141-799-f.g. (1919)

(14) Moustafa Hassanein Mansouri- History of socialist Doctrines (1915). p.112

(15) ibid p.46

(16) ibid p.9

(17) Marcel colombe- Le Revolution de L`Egypte-1924-1950.

(18) Dr. M.Anis- Studies on 1919 Revolution documents- p.21. the letter was dated June 23,1919

(19) Egyptian Mail 16/4/1919

(20) Marcel Israel (A communist movement leader during the 40`s) A report on the history of the Egyptian communist movement..(written upon my request).

(21) Al Ahram 18/8/1919.

(22) Al Ahram 29/8/1921.

(23) Al Loua`a 5/9/1921.

(24) Al Ahram 7/9/1921

(25) Al Akhbar 20/9/1920 ✓

(26) Al Ahram 9/8/1922.

(27) Al Ahram 10/8/1922

(28) Walter Laquer- Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East p.36

(29) Al Ahram 1/5/1923.

(30) For further details, see:Dr. Rifa`at sa`id- History of the Egyptian communist Movement. Volume I p. 289

(31) International press correspondence-1924 no 102

(32) See Full statement of particulars in Dr. Rifa`at sa`id ibid

(33) Al Ahram 29/9/1924

(34) Al Ahram 4/3/1924

(35) Al Ahram 5/3/1924.

(36) Al Ahram 29/9/1924

(37) Al Ahram 1/6/1925

(38) F.O-371 Egypt and Sudan Piece No 11010

(39) Al Hesab3/5/1925

(40) Al Ahram 3/8/1922.

(41) Al Ahram 3/8/1922

(42) Al Ahram 6/1/1923

(43) A Statement by the Egyptian socialist Party, signed by the secretary general by proxy Ahmed Madani dated 10/11/1922

(44) Walter Laquer- ibid- p.34

(45) International press correspondence V3 n 2 5/1/1923 P. 21

(46) Discussion Minutes with M. Dwedar. The discussion was held in Cairo on 22/1/1970- published in Dr. Rifa`at sa`id ibid- P 656

(47) Marcel Israel-ibid.

(48) Mahmoud Taher Araby- This Unjust Society (Memoirs) P.187

(49) For further details on Constantin Vice (sometimes called Avigdor) refer to walter Laquer:The soviet Union the Middle East p.155 of the Arabic edition noting that his real name is Bahil kousy.

(50) Walter Laquer-communism and Nationalism in the Middle East-ibid P.40

(51) F.O.371 Egypt and Sudan-file 2073/230-piece no 1380

(52) F.O.371 Egypt and Sudan-file 2073/2730-no 1380.

(53) Dr, Rifa`at sa`id- ibid p. 497

(54) J. Stalin- Marxism and the NATIONAL Colonial Question-
London -1947-p.216

(55) Revolutionary Movement in the colonies and Semi- colonies:
thesis adopted by the 6 th congress of the communist International
1928- (Bombay 1948) p.33

and: International Press correspondence- the Discussion on
Bukharins report no:72-17/10/1928-P.7311

(56) Endowment (waqf) is an Islamic system. It grants the proprietor the possibility to pass unto his successors the right of enjoying the property revenues and proceeds, while depriving them from the right to dispose of such property through selling.

Moreover, the proprietor can allocate the revenue of such property to a body corporate (mosque- school- hospital). No one is entitled to transfer the ownership of such property or to dispose of it through selling.

The Endowment document determines the prerequisites that should be available in the supervisor on the Endowment affairs. Endowment increased greatly during the ottoman and Mameluk epochs, where proprietore feared the confiscation of their properties. The Endowment System provided a religious protection to such properties.

(57) Ivor Spector- The Soviet Union and the Muslim world
(1929)p.141

The author stated that he copied this programme from the Russian Revolutionary Orient Magazine no 1 and 2 1932. I looked throgth these two editions, but could not find it.

(58)A document entitled "A monarchic decree denaturalizing eight Egyptians" Signed by "Fouad I", dated August 20,1931- Abdeen Palace Archives.

The eight names belonged to members of the Egyptian communist Party, who were dispatched to study in the Soviet Union.

This decree prohibited them from returning to their homeland.

Some of them were forced to settle finally in the Soviet Union. Others indulged in dangerous endeavors, in order to return home secretly and proceed with their struggle...

It is well-known that a wide information campaign preceded the issuance of this monarchic decree in both Egyptian and English papers. They warned against the allowance of such Egyptians to return home, after having studied Marxism "because each one will return after having become an Egyptian Lenin".

(59) Protocol of the 6 th comintern conference Part 6 p.195 9th german Edition)....

(60) The communist International prior to the 7 th international conference- P.90 (the German Edition)

- (61) F.O. 371 -Egypt and Sudan- FILE 421/493- PIECE nO.19089
- (62) Al Ahram 20/5/1935
- (63) Al Ahram 19/6/1935
- (64) Al Ahram 18/4/1937