

Western Clarion

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Editor: Ewen MacLeod

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THE FELLAHIN.

IF the king of Egypt, Ahmed Fuad Pasha, has inherited little of the renown and dignity of the Egyptian kings of the ancient dynasties, his people are having it brought home to them again that the land of their sojourning, with themselves crowding the fertile valley of the Nile, is again coveted by the invader. In the ancient days the people in occupation developed irrigation projects of their own, in the cultivation of corn; now the invader would, in modern fashion, develop irrigation in the cultivation of cotton. Since the fourth century B. C., Egypt has ceased to be an independent sovereign state, and she enjoyed that state previous to that period only in lapses. And the protecting influence of the desert, subject to penetration as it was then is more so now. An added chapter of "The Book of the Dead," their great literary epic, must include the modern civilizing influences of the long staple cotton plantation and the mill of capital which from that weaves the fine thread of artificial silk, bogus silk which, in these days of poor marketing, is doing its best to drive good silk grades out.

The modern "Egypt for the Egyptians" campaign began in the early 80's and ended then too, and from that time until 1922 Britain imposed a "temporary" occupation upon Egypt. In 1922 the British military occupation ceased—otherwise than that she insisted on maintaining the safety of British Empire communications, defence of Egypt against foreign aggression, governorship (protection) of foreign interests in Egypt and guarantees for British interests in the Sudan. In securing these objectives, British troops have been maintained along the Suez Canal and the Nile Valley.

While Egypt has gained this sort of national status she appears to have actually lost Sudan, hitherto jointly administered by Britain and Egypt. In 1870 it was annexed and declared to be Egyptian territory. In 1885 the Arabs captured Khartoum and killed General Gordon. They held the territory until the troops under Kitchener drove them out in 1898. Then followed the Anglo-Egyptian Sovereignty. In the present dispute in which political assassinations have been the feature for two or three years, the desideratum of the Egyptian nationalists is sole sovereignty of the Sudan. But Lord Cromer called the Sudan a "priceless possession." The Cape to Cairo railway runs through it; it contains some of the most fertile land in Africa; already immense irrigation works are projected which will establish control of the waters of the Nile. Last June Lord Parmoor (for the Labor Government) stated in the House of Lords that under no circumstances would the British Government abandon the Sudan. This was confirmed by Premier MacDonald, and now appears to be proven by Premier Baldwin's government. Attempted assassinations, by the way, have not all been one sided in Egypt. Last July Zaghlul, Premier of Egypt, was shot at and it appears to be agreed the effort, unsuccessful, was made from political motives.

Here lies a problem, for those who are interested in such, of the fates of small nationalities. The Arab Mahdi ruled the Sudan for upwards of fifteen years

before Kitchener established British control. If the fellahin is in bad shape now, and if in considerable number he is destined to shoulder the status of wage worker for British capitalist interests, it appeared that his former status was deplorable. Egyptian nationalist bourgeoisdom would willingly substitute for British in the exploitation process. Can the fellahin escape? Rightly or wrongly, the British Labor Party, or an influential section of it, appears to think they are not to be "given up." That fellahin, like those lower down in Uganda, in Kenya Colony, in Congo, in Iraq and other areas has a mission in life, apparently, and that is to enable his civilizers to substitute manufactured long staple cotton as silk for the silk now on the market, and the process, it would appear, has had some success already.

Now that an important British official has been killed we are likely to see British Imperialism settle itself definitely in the Sudan. That is, if France and America don't once more become indignant over the fate of small peoples who are unable to develop, by themselves, oil, potential silk, coal lands—or whatever it is—or to howl imperially, and who must therefore suffer the grace of God and the tortures of civilization.

HERE AND NOW.

Here and Now we haven't much to say, for the reason that we have but little to talk about. Inspiration, Here and Now, comes usually from inspiring cash totals and these, this time, are so negligible as to be hardly worth talking about. Our scheme is to let them run until next issue, present them all at once, and then make-believe that the cash is worth counting.

FASHIONS.

Fashions are exhibitions of the imitative instinct. Women are much more inclined to imitate each other than men are, because they have, on the whole, more of the characteristics of the child psychology.

There are fashions in ideas just as there are fashions in dress. If nearly everybody in a community believes in a certain way, it is almost as hard for any one of us to think differently from what the rest do as it is for a bird not to fly up when the rest do.

Independence, self-reliance, and originality are opposed to the imitative instinct and tend to weaken and displace it. These qualities indicate strength and maturity, just as the tendency to imitate others indicates weakness and inferiority. "The eccentricity of genius" is a common expression of the fact that persons of extraordinary originality are disposed to act in ways that are unlike those of ordinary people. I remember once hearing Prof. Lester F. Ward, of Brown University, say that he was very nearly mobbed one warm day in September when he walked down Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D. C., with a straw hat on. It was the custom to put straw hats aside on the first of September; and the small boys and small-bore adults who garnished Pennsylvania Avenue that late-summer afternoon did not purpose to allow even a philosopher to be comfortable, if by so doing he violated the sacred usage of the tribe regarding straw hats.

It is often surprising to persons of progressive tendencies that men are so fixed and helpless that they go along year after year and age after age in the same old paths of prejudice, without ever being able to see other and better ways of looking at things. Reforms always move up-hill. Converting people to new ideas is like wearing away stone.

Mental evolution has not proceeded far as yet. Human reason (what there is of it) has grown out of animal instinct. Originality is so rare that it is almost discreditable. The foundations of human thinking are still largely instinctive.

Progress is not natural. We are geared to go round and round. The reformer should not expect too much. We are only as far along as we are. And it is the nature of man to be mechanical.

No wonder we have such high regard for the

past! No wonder we shake our heads at new ideas! No wonder we burn our geniuses at the stake! Considering the kind of beings we have been made out of, it is surprising that we are not worse than we are.

Imitation will not always be stronger than reason, but it is today.

CORRESPONDENCE

NEW WESTMINSTER LABOR PARTY

Editor, Clarion:

The Labor Party group of New Westminster enclose herewith an article, the first of its periodical contributions. It is not an essay on Politics or economics but a program of practical work—a very important work—and we are hopeful that through the medium of your valued publication the attention of other bodies be drawn upon our program and comments be the result.

We further wish to have fifty copies of the issue in which this article appears for local distribution by us.

Yours fraternally,

The New Westminster Labor Party.

D. B. McCormack, Sec'y.

609 Belmont St., New Westminster.

The Labor Party group of New Westminster has come into being as Labor's central organ for political action and the dissemination of propaganda and education. It is primarily built to give service to both organized and unorganized labor and one of its first moves toward this objective was a critical analysis of the actual as well as the possible voting strength of Labor in this constituency.

The following interesting data was collected based on figures as disclosed at the last Provincial Election and supplemented with a survey of the possible voting strength.

	Votes
The Labor candidate polled	678
The candidates of the Conservative, Liberals and Progressives polled	3312
Total votes cast	3990
Registered as voters	5700
On Voters' List not voting	1710
Population New Westminster City about	18000
Foreigners, sick and absent	2000
Assuming those under age	6000
On Voters' List	5700
	13700

Eligible to vote not registered

5300
18000

Allowing even a very generous deduction from this figure for dissentients it must still be admitted that this is a very great latent force.

We are fully justified in claiming that the larger percentage of these 5300 eligibles plus those that did not vote but had the franchise, i.e., 1700, making a total of 7000 rightly belong to Labor.

The old parties have well organized political and electioneering machines and can mobilize the electors to a far greater percentage than Labor. In fact in this particular field Labor has never been active. Here, therefore, is the greatest scope of activity for the Labor Party of New Westminster; the registration of these 5000 eligibles and the education of the 7000 individuals. We concede that an efficiency of 100% in this direction is out of the question for reasons obvious to all students of the Labor movement. The amount of Labor votes that can be won from this group of 7000 individuals depends on the sincerity, sense of duty, willingness and enthusiasm of the active members of the Labor Party aided by co-operation of the Labor Unions and other bodies and individuals in sympathy with the cause of Labor, and the added facilities which must be secured, giving the widest opportunity for these unregistered eligibles to register and vote. Education has then to do its important work.

The Labor Party group of New Westminster is of the opinion that similar conditions with respect to latent and as yet undeveloped voting power must exist in Vancouver and other cities and municipalities and hopes that surveys be instituted and analogous work undertaken. It is hard spade work but the result of such work in this virgin field is obvious. We invite an expression of opinion.

The Labor Party of New Westminster.

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