EGYPT GIVES CHIEF OF WAFD 15 YEARS
By ROBERT C. DOTYSpecial to THE NEW YORK TIMES.
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Serag el-Din, a High Cabinet Official in Old Regime, Is Convicted of Corruption

By ROBERT C. DOTY
Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

CAIRO, Jan. 30—Fuad Serag el-Din, one of the highest figures in Egypt's once dominant Wafd party, was sentenced today to fifteen years' imprisonment for corruption and abuse of office under the old royal regime.

The Revolutionary Tribunal, composed of three of the officers who overthrew King Farouk and seized power in 1952, passed sentence on Serag el-Din after a fifty-day trial that was as much that of the old regime as a whole as of the individual defendant.

During the hearings the 47-year-old former Minister of Interior and Finance and secretary general of the Wafd party heard himself accused of a variety of misdemeanors and crimes ranging from lying about his age to "criminal negligence" in the burning of Cairo by mobs in January, 1952.

Serag el-Din, a "protégé" of Mme. Zeinab el Wakil Nahas, wife of former Premier Mustafa Nahas, was accused of exploiting petticoat influence to help his rise to power.

Power he certainly attained, and popularity. The son of a wealthy landowner, his political assets included encyclopedic

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knowledge of Egypt's rural districts and their regional chiefs on whom the Wafd power rested, and the friendship of many important leaders, including Mme. Nahas.

During the last reign of his party, from January, 1950, to January, 1952, although Mustafa Nahas was Premier, it was generally conceded that Serag el-Din, after the sovereign, was the most powerful man in Egypt.

As such, he was a natural target for the revolutionary regime headed by Maj. Gen. Mohammed Naguib, Egypt's President and Premier, when it set out to wipe out any lingering affection of the Egyptian populace for the excitement and demagoguery associated with the Wafd and the old parliamentary regime.

The defendant was among the most violent agitators against the presence of the British in Egypt, larding his speeches with promises to "wipe out the Britis" and to make flow "rivers of blood."

This won him popularity with the mobs and his alleged interventions on behalf of the cotton speculators in market-rigging operations, his judicious distribution of political favors and his affability brought him the friendship, or at least the deference, of the influential.

But there is an Egyptian proverb that "When a cow is down the knives are many and sharp."

4 Ex-Premiers Testify

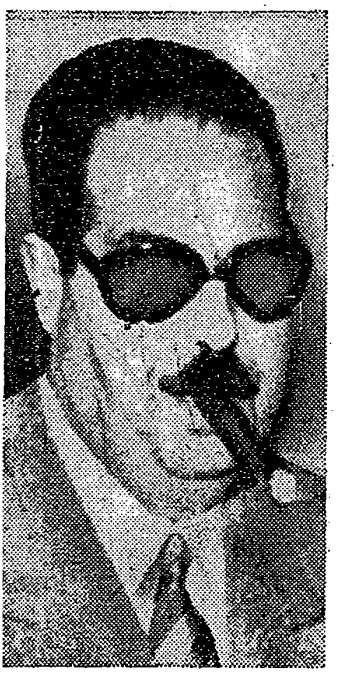
Eighteen witnesses, including four former Premiers and most of the major political figures of the old regime, were called by the court and either voluntarily or under determined prodding by the judges attributed most of Egypt's past woes to Serag el-Din and his associates.

In the process of exhuming old political scandals the reputations of many of the witnesses suffered as much as that of the defendant.

The court reproached Serag el-Din, not with having unleashed violence against the British forces in the Suez Canal Zone in the winter of 1951-52, but with having done it indiscriminately and without preparation.

He sent auxiliary policemen to the canal zone, ostensibly to protect Egyptians from the British. He gave orders for groups of these policemen to resist to the last man when surrounded by British forces in Ismailia.

When word of this massacre reached Cairo students and street mobs rioted through the city,



Associated Press

SENT TO PRISON: Fuad Serag el-Din, once-powerful political leader in Egypt, who was sentenced yesterday to a fifteen-year prison term for corruption and abuse of office under old royal regime.

burning scores of buildings and causing heavy loss of life.

Former Premier Aly Maher, one of the few witnesses who resisted the court's pressure for a blanket condemnation of the accused, still said that Serag el-Din was criminally negligent in failing to prevent this riot.

The defense produced letters from the British Embassy to Aly Maher, the post-riot Premier, requesting that Serag el-Din be "brought to book" for the part he played in the loss of British lives by an order withdrawing the police guard from the Turf Club where several Britons perished at the hands of the mob.

This was in support of the defense thesis that Serag el-Din was a great anti-British patriot. At one point the defense and the court president, Wing Commander Abdel Latif Boghdadi, disputed the authorship of the plan to blow up a British ship in the canal.

In addition to the jail sentence the court ordered the confiscation of all property of Yassin Serag el-Din, the defendant's brother, acquired between 1950 and 1952, apparently on the theory that this had been obtained through the corrupt influence of the defendant.

The court ruled also that Abdel Moneim Hanoux, a wealthy Egyptian for whom Serag el-Din had a road built connecting his estate with the main highway, must repay the state for the cost.

The judgment placed on record also the court's disapproval of the "disgraceful attitudes" of former politicians and its regret and condemnation for the "unplanned attitude" of the Wafdist Government with regard to the liberation battle in the canal zone.

Relatives of Serag el-Din later visited the judges to request a reduction of the sentence and permission for it to be served by confinement at home on the ground that the defendant could not survive a full jail term because of ill health. The court did not rule immediately on this plea.

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