ZIGZAGGING IN EGYPT
New York Times (1857-Current file); Mar 30, 1954; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851 - 2002)
pg. 26

ZIGZAGGING IN EGYPT

If ever a situation was kaleidoscopic it has been that of Egypt in the past three or four weeks. Shifts, turns, overturns, mobs rising first for one faction and then for another, a President descending to the depths one day, rising to the heights a few days later and now falling to new depths—such is the bewildering scenario that races across the Egyptian screen. It is hardly any wonder that the anxious world outside becomes confused and discouraged trying to follow the plot.

The latest news is that the officers of the Revolution Command Council have canceled all their previous reluctant decisions to hold elections for a constituent assembly in June and to abolish their junta in July. Now they talk of a long "transition period."

Everyone appeals to "the people," but who are the people? Surely not the mobs that either side can call up with a small expenditure of money and incitement. It is true that when the R. C. C. tried to depose President Naguib a month ago there was an apparently spontaneous public reaction in which some army officers joined. Evidently, General Naguib decided then that his survival depended on a return of constitutional—which meant civilian—rule. Perhaps he thought the R. C. C. would have to bow out. Obviously he was wrong and he has played his cards badly. One has a feeling that General Naguib is beyond his depth in this whole business.

The military argument is that the young officers did not make the "revolution" just to see power restored again to the old corrupt, demagogic crowd led by the Wafdists and Saadists and egged on by the Socialists, Communists and Moslem Brotherhood. If the alternative to this set is firm rule by the R. C. C. it would seem preferable. Only the army can now restore stability, and without a quick restoration of law and order there could be chaos of a nasty sort. The Egyptian mob has been called up too often in recent years—mostly by the xenophobic Wafdists—to be easily controllable.

Part of the recent trouble has been a split among the army officers, but the group supporting General Naguib and opposing Lieut. Col. Nasser would now appear to be a small minority. If the army junta pulls itself together it can yet save Egypt, and that is what it appears to be doing. One can therefore sustain some guarded optimism, but it is only too clear that nobody can be sure of anything in Egypt today.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.