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Egypt

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This article, recounting the events of the day, was written on the evening of 14 August, at 9pm Central European Time.

A few days before 14 August 2013, the workers at the steel-works in Suez, who have been in dispute since the end of 2012, found out about the dismissal of 12 their colleagues. Then the so-called security forces arrested two of their representatives: Amr Yousif and Abd-Al-Ra'uf. The directorate of the firm, under state control, invoked losses in order to justify not meeting the demands of the workers. However, it had donated a significant sum in order to pay the national debt (partly private or semi-private in origin) of the Egyptian state. The Minister for Labour, Kamal Abou Aita, did not express any eagerness to condemn this attack on the rights of employees. President Adly Mansour, the Prime Minister Hazem Beblawi and Defence Minister Abdel Fattah Al-Sissi had indicated the effective content of their policy: to replace any policy in favour of the democratic and social rights (such as a popular majority demanded on June 30, 2013) by "a war against the terrorists" (to use the terms of the police force): in the event the Moslem Brotherhood (MB).

On 13 August 2013, the security forces intervened into serious confrontations between "Morsi supporters" and their opponents. On August 14, at 5 am, the police force started to use strong teargas on one of the two positions occupied by the pro-Morsi forces. The trains were halted to prevent demonstrations outside of Cairo. Around 12.30 pm, on August 14, the Egyptian Ministry for Health announced that the intervention by the police - the army gave the impression of not being in the forefront - had led to 149 deaths across the country. At Rabaa Al-Adawiya square in Cairo, epicentre of the pro-Morsi mobilization, an AFP journalist counted the bodies of 124 demonstrators. There was firing with live ammunition, with the head and chest serving as "targets". According to convergent sources, at least 35 died there in the province of Fayoum, in the south of Cairo. The effective number of dead and casualties will much exceed these official figures.

A little after 2 pm on August 14, a one month state emergency was declared and a curfew was imposed in Cairo and in eleven provinces. Both will not only be used to repress the MB, but also future strikes and other demonstrations. At 6 pm, a security spokesperson affirmed that Rabaa Al-Adawiya square was "completely under control". A conventional formula in this kind of situation and revealing of uncertainties. During a short televised speech in the evening, Hazem Beblawi thanked the police force "for acting with the greatest restraint". Another note with a characteristic tonality. Moreover, the Prime Minister insisted that on "no self-respecting state could have tolerated" such occupations. The Ministers of Interior of Rajoy in the Spanish State or Samaras in Greece would not contradict him. The Egyptian Prime Minister prepares the immediate future.

In the middle of the afternoon on August 14, Mohammed El-Baradei, vice-president, resigned from the government: "It became difficult to me to continue to assume responsibility for decisions with which I do not agree", he wrote, after having covered Sissi's political-security operation. The possibility of serious confrontations, localised in the country and over a certain period, is far from ruled out. When the MB (or forces comparable to the latter) are repressed with violence, in cases of minimal resistance, that causes a response from those groups; weapons are not lacking in Egypt. Moreover, the social and political reality of the MB - all the more given their position as a force targeted by repression which has marked their whole history - cannot and should not be underestimated.

However, currently, the army is more openly than ever running the country. This is what the "Western" powers fear. The army faces three difficulties (at least). That of controlling the security situation on a country wide scale - even if it means declaring, tomorrow, that the police force has "committed excesses" - in a situation of skewed political bipolarisation, largely constructed by itself and which paves the way for so-called confessional confrontations. The attacks against Copts, for example in Sohag, indicate this. That of seeking a "compromise", as its Western tutors

request, after the failure of all the mediations, and in particular that of the grand sheikh of Al-Azhar who attempted to bring together the interim government, the military and the MB before August 14. That of meeting social and democratic demands, even if a sector of the population seems for now to have given Sissi the mandate to deal with the MB. Then there is the coming trial of Morsi, and numerous other trials - Mubarak and family, Morsi and family, as well as the members of the forces who killed the martyrs of the revolution of 2011.

These three challenges could, in case of failure, open a phase where the genuinely democratic and social aspects of the revolution are expressed with force. Nothing is certain. But it is this fear which stalks the Western governments.

All the Western representatives will insist on the civilian façade of the government being restored. Prime Minister Beblawi thus undertook on the evening of August 14 to prepare an electoral process for early 2014! US Secretary of State John Kerry has asked the army to organise elections and regretted the manner in which the Muslim Brotherhood was “dispersed”, which should reassure the Egyptian prime minister and police. For now we will not deal with the other pieces of the regional jigsaw puzzle, as they appear difficult to bring together. Except of course for the self-proclaimed “anti-imperialist experts” of a world in which everything is ruled by “plots” (planned by the White House), plots whose mechanism is as reliable as it is complicated, in this watch which few clockmakers master.