

## The Story Behind the Stamp: Signing of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, Balian 64-66 Dec. 22, 1936



Since the British takeover of Egypt in 1882 nationalist movements had arisen to gain at least had some control over their own country. The Wafd [meaning “delegation”] party, which was founded in the aftermath of World War I, was not the first nationalist group, but had the longest lasting impact. Formed under Saad Zaghloul, they presented themselves to General Sir Reginald Wingate, the High Commissioner in Egypt, and told him that the party’s main goal was the immediate termination of the British occupation. British intransigence led to the revolution of 1919 and Zaghloul was exiled to Malta for a short period.

After the partial independence of 1922, the Wafd establishes itself as a political party and in the new kingdom of King Fouad it won 90 per cent of the seats in the First Chamber in 1927. That same year Zaghloul died and was succeeded as party leader by Mustafa Nahas Pasha. In 1928 the King sacked Nahas as Prime Minister and suspended the 1923 constitution. The April 1936 election returned the Wafd to power, and a Regency Council ruled on behalf of the new King Farouk.

A united front from the Wafd majority and other nationalist parties sent a delegation to England to negotiate the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty in 1936. Earlier attempts at treaties had failed for a variety of reasons, but by then Egyptian politicians were willing to make concessions they had turned down earlier because they now feared a world war. The outcome was a treaty that gave Egypt little more than the terms it had been offered a decade earlier. It ended the occupation, although British troops were still to be stationed in the Suez Canal Zone. It gave Egypt British support for its attempt to be admitted into the League of Nations as an independent country.

The Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, bringing a formal end to the British occupation, was signed in London on August 26, 1936, and ratified on December 22, when it came into effect. An official signing took place in Zaafarana Palace in Cairo by grandees including Anthony Eden, Ramsay Macdonald and Lord Halifax for the UK and Nahas Pasha, Ali Maher, Muhammad Mahmoud and Boutros Ghali for Egypt. The ratification was signed by Eden and Nahas only. From the photo, showing Nahas and Eden, it appears that this meeting was used in the stamp design. Stamped cards signed by the signatories have been reported, the example above bearing the signatures of Nahas Pasha and Miles Lampson.

