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THE WAFD PARTY OF EGYPT

1936 - 1945

by

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DEDICATION:

To F.I.

and to my room-mates, V.T., Z.A.W., and M.W.Z.N.

all of whom aspire to a Community

above partisanry.

A B S T R A C T

An examination of the Wafd Party of Egypt may provide evidence on a major question of modern Arab society: Is the political party system effective in achieving public welfare? A related question concerns the effectiveness of one type of party - relatively democratic in its functions, widely-representative, evolutionary, constitutional and parliamentary - such as in fact the Wafd was.

This thesis gives an historical record of the Wafd during one period of its existence, showing what it did for the internal situation of Egypt, its actions in contention with other political forces, and its party organization. The method is mostly chronological and descriptive, little analytic or interpretive; often the events are recounted month by month, and sometimes day by day. This close focus show up the particulars of the party, heretofore never elaborated in one study. It provides the basis for a political interpretation but does not offer it. Due to this concentration upon details, the time span is limited to a decade.

This study begins in 1936 because at this time issues of internal affairs acquired more prominence than

before. In 1936 the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty settled many international issues; King Fu'ad died, leaving the Wafd freer to exercise its authority; Muṣṭafā an-Naḥḥās had used the nine years since the death of Sa'd Zaghlūl to organize the Wafd as a full-fledged political party with vast powers of patronage and influence throughout the country. In 1936 began a Wafdist Government in power long enough to demonstrate its policies and their effectiveness.

In this period, 1936-1939, the Wafd proved that it could preserve only part of its party heritage, developed from 1919. Regarding leadership, Naḥḥās was able to continue with the authority of Zaghlul and to consolidate Wafdist organization, its Central Committee and its Parliamentary Group. Also he was able to continue the policy of complete independence and to retain a large measure of popular support. Yet on other matters he and the Wafd failed. Wafdist party discipline was unable to prevent the Sa'dist schism and subsequent disruption in the Wafdist ranks. As for its political campaign, the Wafd could not gain ascendancy over the young King Faruq, whose palace clique forced the Wafd out of office in 1938. Furthermore, the Wafd did not implement, even if it could partially formulate, a consistent and thorough-going policy of domestic reform and development. Nor

could it assimilate and aggregate the strong interest groups emerging in the society: such as the youth, civil service, industrialists, merchants, large land-owners, labor and religious elements. For example, the Wafdist Blue Shirts, in spite of their unruly violence, failed to overcome opposition of the Green Shirts, and sporadically-articulate anti-Wafd student groups. Civil Service personnel were alienated by the Wafd's great spoils and patronage system; the bureaucrats along with the industrialists hastened to ally with the Sa'dists. Although some gravitated to the Wafd, the large land-owners stayed with the Liberal-Constitutionalists. Labor was courted by the Wafd, but unsuccessfully, and repression was kept up. Religious groups (as the Azharites) stayed away from the Wafd (largely a secular party) and remained aligned with the King, or in later years, the Muslim Brethren. These failures and weaknesses of the Wafd led to its collapse in the elections of spring 1938.

From 1939-1941 the Wafd carried on the agitation in opposition that it was known for. Although unable to overturn the palace governments, it could at least render them unstable, unpopular, and ineffective. For its party program the Wafd kept up its policy of complete independence,

pressing the British with demands, but at the same time supporting the Allies and democracy against Fascism, a steadfastness which contrasted with the opportunism of the other parties and political elements. Also in its call for reforms, the Wafd demanded greater efforts in defense and public welfare (food supplies, health, economic improvements).

Coming into power at British behest and staying at their insistence, the Wafd lost some of its prestige as a movement for "complete independence"; it went on to cooperate closely with the British throughout the war. In Parliament the Wafd carried out some substantial legislation, not far-reaching but at least immediately beneficial (as the labor, agricultural, literacy and tax laws). The Cabinet likewise performed creditably, as in meeting shortages and speculation, preserving public order under dangerous internal and external conditions, and beginning industrialization. Again, however, Party unity suffered - from the schism of Makram 'Ubaid and its exposures. The Wafd still could not limit the power of Faruq and his advisers, the Nahhas Government ultimately being dismissed at their direction. Nor did the Wafd have enough confidence in its popular support to contest the elections of 1945. So the Wafd fell from

power, this time fatally stricken with incapacities: disintegration of party unity; loss of wide public support; failure to implement sufficiently the party program, and estrangement from too many interest groups.

This history shows the Wafd beset by major challenges from within and without the party. If it failed to overcome these challenges and evolve into a more effective party, this failure could not be ascribed entirely to its own weaknesses. The endemic instability of the period, governments lasting on the average for one and a half years and no Parliament sitting for its full five-year term, the manifold conflicting interests meant that no one political element could gain dominance without a revolutionary change. Given its structure and its aims, the Wafd could not be expected to have done this transformation of the political system. Even if the Wafd had done its best, it would likely have gone down before the conditions that existed and the events that occurred in this decade, 1936-1945.

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INTRODUCTION

The Wafd Party of Egypt merits study for several reasons. By count of members it was the largest mass political party in the Arab world, and by count of years it was the longest operative political party.¹ It is noteworthy for its part in achieving some important nationalist victories in Egypt - i.e. gaining "complete independence" (istiqlāl tām in the Egyptian slogan), abolishing the capitulations and mixed courts (measures prejudicial to full sovereignty), upholding a form of constitutionalism (as in representation, law-making, and the rule of law against royal autocracy), consolidating national unity, and promoting secularism in political affairs.

¹Along with all other political parties in Egypt, the Wafd was banned by General Neguib as Premier on January 16, 1953.

In a statement from the General Staff, Neguib declared:

"...We expected that the parties would value the high national interest and would cease their ruinous political practices which came to exist in the country and which split our unity and separated our common interests. But few of the professional politicians and pretended nationalists stopped.

On the contrary, it appeared to us that personal desires and partisan interests, which corrupted the aims of the 1919 Revolution, wish to seek again to divide us in these dangerous times of our national history. Moreover, certain elements have not abstained from seeking the intervention of foreign powers and preparation for the

This thesis analysis the Wafd historically and entirely with regard to its domestic policy and internal structure, leaving aside the international reference which has been the preoccupation of most historians treating this period of Egyptian history. The aim is to learn how the Wafd worked as a political party, a government, and a socially "transitional" pressure group. We will examine the extent of its influence on Egyptian society.

country's return to its past condition of corruption and anarchy, as helped by finance and despicable plots, along with partisanry (hizbiya)...

Since the parties continue their old ways and keep their reactionary mentality, not imagining the grave danger to the existence of our country and its future, I therefore announce the dissolution (hall) of all political parties from this day on, and the deliverance of all their finances over to popular welfare, instead of for sowing the seeds of rebellion and dissension.

So that the country may be blessed with stability and productiveness I declare a transitional period of three years, so that we may establish a sound and constitutional democratic government..."

("al-Ahram", January 17, 1953-author's translation)

On January 18 three decrees were published by the Council of Ministers in the Official Gazette; these decrees authorized the banning of all parties, the confiscation of their finance, and the prohibition of politicians from taking part in political activity.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND: THE SITUATION OF THE PARTY, 1919 - 1936

The Wafd began not as a political party but as a "delegation" (Arabic: wafd), claiming to represent the will of the Egyptian people.² On November 13, 1918 Sa'd Zaghlūl Pasha, Abdul 'Aziz Fahmi Bey, and 'Ali Shaarawi Pasha formed a small delegation to visit the British High Commissioner, Sir Reginald Wingate, and to request permission to visit London, where they would plead the cause of independence. Another personality, Amīr 'Umar Ṭūsūn, claims the credit for conceiving the idea of a "wafd", which would seek Egyptian rights of self-determination as proclaimed in the second and twelfth

²In its first constitution, drawn up in 1918, the Wafd declared that "the Wafd draws its power from the will of the Egyptian people expressed either directly or through their representatives in the representative bodies". - translated by Albert Hourani from Abbās Mahmūd al-'Aqqād's biography of Sa'd Zaghlūl (Cairo, 1936), quoted in Hourani's Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939, Royal Institute of International Affairs, Oxford, London, 1962.

Again to Wingate in person Zaghlūl claimed that he and his associates were "natural representatives empowered by the Egyptian nation itself". Ibid., al-'Aqqād, p. 202, Hourani, p. 219.

How often since then have politicians claimed to speak for the will of the people, and with much less authority!

of President Wilson's Fourteen Points.³ The Prime Minister, Hussein Rushdi Pasha, lent his support to the mission. However, the British Government refused the request, leading Rushdi to offer his resignation on two subsequent occasions in protest. Four other leading politicians soon joined the original three to become the "founding fathers" of the Wafd: Ahmad Luṭfi as-Saiyid Bey (a renowned educator), Abdul Laṭīf Makabātti Bey (member of the Legislative Council and a sympathizer with the Nationalist Party), Muḥammad 'Alī 'Allouba Bey (also a member of the Legislative Council and a member of the Executive Committee of the Nationalist Party), and Ḥamad al-Basil Pasha.⁴

³In the early history of the Wafd three stages may be discerned: a) a movement expressing the popular sentiment, 1918-1921; b) schisms from the movement, leading to formation of the Liberal Constitutional Party, 1921-1922; and c) the Wafd as a political party, 1922-. For this outline and a documented analysis on the rise of the Wafd, see Mahmud Zaiyid's Nisha' Hizb al-Wafd al-Misri 1918-1924 in al-Abḥāth (A.U.B.), June 1962, pp. 242-280.

For reference to Amīr Ṭūsūn and the counter-wafd, refer to Ahmad Shafiq, Tamhid, Hawliyyat Misr as-Siyasiyyah, vol.1 Matba' Shafiq Pasha, 1926, p. 145.

⁴Amin Youssef Bey, Independent Egypt, Murray, London, 1940, p. 62. Muḥammad Hussein Heykal, Mudhakiratfi as-Siyasiyyah al-Misriyah, Maktabah an-Nahdah al-Misriyah, Cairo, 1951, pp. 78-79. Except for Luṭfi as-Saiyid all of the seven original Wafdists were members of the Legislative Council.

A rival Wafd was almost formed, led by leaders of the Nationalist Party, such as Amīr Ṭūsūn, Muḥammad Sa'īd Pasha (a former Prime Minister) and Isma'īl Ṣidqi Pasha.⁵ Reconciliation between the rival wafds was reached when Sa'd Zaghlul's wafd took in three Nationalists, Muṣṭafā an-Naḥḥas Pasha (then a judge of the People's Courts), Dr. Ḥāfiẓ 'Afīfi Bey, and Sidqi Pasha. Then to counteract the influence of the Nationalist Party, other personalities loyal to Zaghlūl were named, so that the Wafd grew to a membership of 17 from its original 7. The additions included: Muḥammad Abdul Khāliq Madkūr Pasha, George Khayyāṭ Bey, Sinwat Bey Ḥanna, Hussein Wasīf Pasha, Michel Bey Luṭfallah, and Maḥmūd Bey Abu Naṣr. Nearly each of these 17 politicians figure prominently in subsequent party history, each having his own story of rise, fall, and sometimes schism. In fact, nearly all prominent Egyptian politicians of the first half-century had some association at one time or another with the Wafd during its formative period.

The Wafd set out immediately to gain popular support.⁶ Amīn Yūsuf Bey led a campaign to secure a popular mandate

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Mahmud Zaiyid, op. cit.

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Ibid. Amīn Yūsuf relates that he was responsible for bringing Nahhas into the Wafd, Independent Egypt, op. cit., p. 64.

(Arabic: tawkīl), and obtained a list of more than 110,000 signatures, especially from government officials in the Delta towns of Ṭanṭah, Manṣourah, Zagazig, Port Sa'id, and Damietṭa.⁷ Popular agitation grew to an extent that alarmed the British, who saw it as a threat to the protectorate, declared on December 18, 1914, and to the subsequent martial law (Arabic: al-ḥukm al-'urfi) in force. Sa'id Zaghlūl, along with Hamad al-Basil, Muhammad Mahmūd, and Isma'il Sidqi, was deported to Malta on March 6, 1919. How ironic that the British lumped together these three men who later diverged so widely from one another, each founding a separate party!

Although still unwilling and unorganized enough to constitute itself as a political party, the Wafd was able to form a General Committee (lajnah markaziyah) in April of 1919. Located in Cairo, this Central Committee had enough members and an established enough procedure so that it could function even if some of its members were

⁷ Amin Yusuf, Independent Egypt, op. cit., p. 65.

Heikal mentions signatures of "lawyers, doctors, engineers and other gentlemen from the various high professional classes", indicating the class appeal of the early Wafd. Copies of the list of signatures were sent to local representative bodies, then to omdahs ('umad) and village elders ('ayyan), mayors (mudiriyyin) and councillors (ma'murin). Heikal, op. cit., p. 86.

imprisoned or exiled. A Constitution of 26 articles provided for officers (President, Secretary-General, and Treasurer), regular meetings, secrecy, and much supervisory authority to the President, Sa'd Zaghlūl.⁸ Other committees were established in other towns, the first of which being in Tanṭah, under the direction of Muhammad Najib al-Gharabli Pasha.⁹ Also a Wafdist Women's Central Committee was formed by Mme. Huda ash-Shaarawi (the wife of Ali Shaarawi Pasha) and assisted by Mme. Zaghlūl, a Circassian lady of much ability and influence. In Sa'd Zaghlul's absence, the Central Committee was able to rouse the people into a boycott of British goods and then an armed revolt on a limited scale.

A group diverse in its composition, the early Wafd suffered a serious schism in the first year of its existence. It was to be the first of many to follow, indicating a chronic disability in the "interest aggregation" function of a political party, or compromise in lower interests for the sake of higher. In July 1919 Isma'il Sidqi had a

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Ahmad Shafiq, Tamhid, vol.1, op. cit., pp. 153-156.

See the text of the Wafd Constitution of 1919 in an appendix to the notes of this Chapter. Besides the wide powers invested in the President, also noteworthy in the Constitution are the many provisions relating to the use of Party funds, which were used in great part to finance travels of the Wafd to London and Paris.

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Zaiyid, al-Abhath, op. cit.

bitter dispute with the eminent Dr. Ahmad Luṭfi as-Saiyid: the problem concerned Sidqi's alleged disclosure of Wafdist publications and secrets.¹⁰ When Sidqi seceded from the Wafd, he was followed by Mahmud Abu Nasr Bey, Hussein Wasfi Pasha, and Ali Bey Ḥafiz Ramadan. A second and even more serious schism came in the spring of 1921, upon Zaghlūl's return from Paris. Several of the delegates had differed with Zaghlūl over the negotiations, and the conflict intensified over the question of participation in Adli Yeghen's government. An influential group then seceded, composed of Hamad al-Basil, Abdul Laṭīf al-Makabatti, Muhammad Mahmūd, Ahmad Lutfi as-Saiyid, and Muhammad Ali 'Allouba. Shaarawi Pasha announced his resignation because of the Wafd's "insincere work". In May Hafiz 'Afifi, George Khayyat, and Madkur Pasha joined the seceders, while Ali Maher (later to become the arch-foe of the Wafd) stopped attending Wafdist meetings as of July, 1921. A tally of the names shows that five of the original seven had left the party, an astounding challenge to party discipline!

When Zaghlūl was deported to the Seychelles Islands in December of 1921, the separatists temporarily returned to the fold in a demonstration of unity against British suppression of nationalist sentiment. It would appear that the exile of Zaghlūl gave him a great boost in popularity

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Ibid.

at a time when his position and that of the Wafd was endangered from within. The next year, in January, 1922, when new members were added to the ranks of the Wafd, the seceders again withdrew, this time permanently. From their numbers only two chose to remain with the Wafd: Hamad al-Basil and George Khayyat. These early schisms may indicate several features of the Wafd, which would later cause it still more trouble: bitter personal rivalry and ambition in its higher echelons; diverse and often conflicting political and economic interests (particularly the upper versus the middle class); uncompromising and often authoritarian leadership as by Zaghlul; and constant intriguing by elder politicians, often of Turkish origin and disposition.

During the period from 1919 to 1924 the Wafd succeeded in awakening the consciousness of a segment of the middle class: civil servants, professional classes (especially lawyers), and students (especially at the secondary level), all of whom engaged in the "interest articulation" function of political parties.¹¹ Between

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For reference to the student demonstrations at the time, see the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Survey of International Affairs, 1925, Oxford, London, 1928, pp. 190-191; also John Marlowe, Anglo-Egyptian Relations 1800-1953, Cresset, London, 1954, p. 202. The lawyers were also active in strikes.

the parties there was little conflict, as a "National Union" alliance prevailed among them. Internally the Wafd set up political cells in large towns and organized "Committees of Independence" in many villages. For its principles, the Party supported the 1923 Constitution promulgated by King Fu'ad on August 20, 1923.¹² The Constitution accorded many rights to Egyptian citizens, many rights being guaranteed "within the limits of the law" or "unless contrary to public order", reservations wide enough to give considerable royal prerogatives to the King, and often used against the Wafd. One of the Wafd's favorite clauses provided for free and obligatory elementary education (Article 19). Students were a vocal interest group supporting the Wafd, and Zaghlūl himself had been a Minister of Education under Cromer; the slow pace of education under the protectorate was one of the strongest nationalist criticisms against it. Constitutional

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Refer to the Official copy of the 1923 Constitution (which was based on European models, particularly the Belgian) Rescrit Royal no. 42 de 1923 (Le Caire, Imprimerie Nationale, Boulac, 1935) as reprinted in Helen M. Davis (editor) Constitutions, Electoral Laws, Treaties of States in the Near and Middle East, Duke University Press, Durham, 1947.

For the Wafd's approbation of the 1923 Constitution, see Zaghlūl's remarks on the Constitution in answer to King Fu'ad's Speech from the Throne on March 15, 1924, as published (in Italian) in Oriente Moderno, vol. 4, 1924, p. 277. The Wafd was not represented in the Committee which drafted the Constitution, consequently not esteeming the document until the party saw its value as a claim against the King.

provisions less agreeable to the Wafd touched on royal authority: the right to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies (Article 38), the power to issue decrees having the force of law when Parliament was not in session (Article 41), and the power to organize the public services and name the bureaucrats (Article 44). Nonetheless, the Wafd was content to have a sound constitution with many provisions for public welfare. More than allegiance to the Constitution and struggle for complete independence, Zaghlūl did not have a comprehensive party program, and was less interested in internal reform than in independence.¹³

The Wafd began as a political party in 1922, when

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Zaghlūl's neglect of internal affairs, or rather the eclipse of domestic problems by the independence movement, is noted by Albert Hourani, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

An even more severe judgment on Zaghlūl and the Wafd's devotion to public welfare, is passed by Tom Little, *Egypt*, Benn, London, 1958. p. 141:

"The Wafd itself, despite the fact that the whole nation followed it blindly into rebellion against Britain, was not a popular movement in the social sense. It represented the reactionary force of the upper class in Egypt, and therefore, to some extent, had taken the place of the old Turkish aristocratic movement. Zaghlūl Pasha, perhaps because he understood the strength of popular agitation, had no sympathy with popular agitation for social ends. When in 1923 there were disturbances among urban factory workers, whose life was extremely depressed by the post-war inflation of prices, Zaghlūl preferred repression to reform and used troops to throw hundreds of workers into goal, where they remained for several months. Many of these disturbances had been in foreign firms, but he was not willing to tolerate that form of anti-foreign struggle".

it closed ranks to combat the newly-formed Liberal Constitutional Party. Then on April 26, 1924 the Wafd intensified its party functions by consolidating itself in the Chamber of Deputies as the "Parliamentary Wafd Party" (al-hizb al-wafdi an-niyabi).¹⁴ On May 14 of the same year it entered the Senate as the "Senatorial Wafd Party". As a "steering committee" for the Wafdist deputies and senators, an Executive Committee (lajnah tanfiziyah) was formed, composed of either one or two deputies from each district (mudiriyah) i.e. 14 - 28 members. It would serve as a "caucus", meeting once every week. Every Wafdist deputy should present to the Executive Committee whatever interpellations or motions he wished to make before the Chamber. The Committee would decide on the usefulness of the measure and all deputies would be bound by its decisions.¹⁵ Leading figures in the Committee were Makram 'Ubaid (a Copt, chief organizer, and public speaker), Hamad

¹⁴Jacob Landau, Parliaments and Parties in Egypt, Praeger, New York, 1954, pp. 157-158. For further notes on the Wafd in Parliament in 1924, see Oriente Moderno vol. 4, 1924, pp. 467-470; "al-Ahram" April 27, 1924; and (London) "Times", April 29, 1924.

¹⁵Hamad al-Basil made a speech to an assembly of Wafdist deputies and senators on April 26, 1924, delineating the nature of the Executive Committee. His points were recorded by Muhammad Ibrahim al-Jaza'iri in Athar az-Za'im, Sa'd Zaghul, Dar al-Kutub, Cairo, 1928, pp. 126-129.

For some boasting on the Wafd's power and mission, given on the same day by Hamad al-Basil (and reported in "al-Ahram"), see Ahmad Shafiq, Hawliyat Misr as-Siyasiyah, vol. 1, op cit., p. 151.

al-Basil Pasha (party "whip"), Zaghlūl (President of the Executive Committee), and Ahmad Mazloum Pasha (Vice President of the Executive Committee and President of the Chamber of Deputies). The Senatorial Executive Committee was composed of Sa'd Muhammad and Fathallah Barakat (a nephew of Zaghlūl's) as Vice-President; Muhammad Mahmud Khalil Bey as Secretary; and Muhammad 'Izz al-'Arab Bey as Deputy Secretary.

On January 12, 1924 Zaghlūl was named Prime Minister after elections giving the Wafd 188 of 215 seats in the Chamber of Deputies.¹⁶ Numerous Anglophile politicians were defeated in this election, which was admitted by all sides to have been freely conducted (in contrast to so many elections in the coming decades). Muhammad Mahmud Pasha, together with some other secessionists from the Wafd, allied himself with the Liberal Constitutionalist Party led by 'Adli Yeghen Pasha. The Wafd also faced a few opposition deputies belonging to the Nationalist Party, a rival to the original Wafd, and a few independents. A year later on January 10, 1925 the Ittihad (Unity) Party was formed as another opposition faction, led by Yahya Ibrahim (a former Prime Minister

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For elections returns consult Oriente Moderne, vol. 4, 1924, p. 64 and "Daily Herald", January 14-15, 1924.

and a defeated deputy) and Nashat Pasha.¹⁷

Zaghlūl's cabinet was almost completely Wafdist, ready to carry out whatever plans he had. In a speech announcing his government's program, Zaghlūl mentioned administrative and legislative reform, and the promotion of domestic tranquillity.¹⁸ All his recommendations were worded diffusely, vaguely, and rhetorically, without exact proposals; the emphasis was on foreign affairs nearly to the exclusion of domestic considerations. Indeed, the Zaghlūl government from March to December 1924

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With surprising frankness, Marlowe states that British policy consciously used the opposition parties as a lever against the Wafd:

"The encouragement of a 'middle' party between the Wafd and the Palace, which would be able to stand up to the Wafd without the necessity either of an alliance with the Palace or of reliance on British support, become the principal immediate objective of British policy in Egypt". (Anglo-Egyptian Relations, op. cit., p. 272.

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The speech giving the program of the new ministry is summarized in al-Jaza'iri, op. cit., pp. 53-55. The full text may be found in "al-Muqattam", January 27, 1924. Zaghlūl, called ra'is jalīl as a common honorific, mentioned stability as a major aim, lamenting the harm of previous financial and administrative changes (tasarrufat). He criticized the lack of adequate funds for education, the lack of public safety and health; he called for steps towards development and progress, and strengthening the Parliament. For another typically diffuse and rhetoric speech from the early Wafd, read the "Call from the Egyptian Wafd" by Hamad al-Basil, al-Jaza'iri, op. cit., p. 75.

was mostly preoccupied with foreign affairs, or if internal, spent on inter-party politicking.

Yet the Wafd as a government did manage to make its influence felt in some ways in the Parliament and in the country. The "Règlement Intérieur" or "Organization of Internal Affairs" was passed on December 1, 1924, carrying out a purge of local government officials, dismissing old and corrupt omdahs and sheikhs, and replacing them with energetic and often Wafdist-leaning notables. In a Parliamentary debate two years later, when the Wafdists were criticized for their use of patronage, Hafiz 'Abdin Bey (a member of the Wafdist Executive Committee) recounted an incident showing the necessity of the Organization law: his village home had been attacked by the Ittihad Party in connivance with the village omdeh and ma'mur.¹⁹ Hafiz Bey testified that

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Hafiz Bey's remarks, printed in the Journal Officiel, July 6, 1926, pp. 89-90, reveal tactics of village politics at that time:

"My house was robbed, I am saying, and it was done so shamefully on an order from the men of the Ittihad. I was so ignominiously manhandled with my children; yet the aggressors carried no customary warrant. I wanted to have recourse to the tribunals, but the Ittihad raised a wall of China between justice and me, and did everthing to prevent me from taking action against the mudir, the deputy mudir, and the ma'mur who were then above the law". (author's translation from the French)

the corrupt omdah had been convicted of 34 law infractions and arrested for forgery!

The Wafd also did some work for education. In June 1924 the education budget of LE 1,607,189 (or 5% of the total state budget) was raised by LE 100,000 to create 110 primary schools of the French école normale type.²⁰ In conformity with the constitutional provision, a law establishing free elementary education was passed; but enforcement of the law was difficult. A law of July 29, 1924 modified the old electoral law, abolishing the second grade of the "électeurs-délégués", and substituting direct voting; deputies and senators were required to be able to read and write well; holding another public office was forbidden.²¹ According to Amin Yusuf, Zaghāl planned other reforms, such as for the judiciary, ridding it of corruption and partiality, and tax reform, making it more equitable and seeing that the fallahin revenues were reinvested by the State in rural development projects.²²

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Journal Officiel, 1924, p. 397.

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Law No. 4 of 1924, as printed in Oriente Moderno, vol. 4, 1924, pp. 535-539.

²²

Amin Yusuf, op. cit., p. 126

Following the assassination of the British Commander-in-Chief (Sirdar) of the Egyptian Army, Sir Lee Stack, on November 1924, and in retaliation for Zaghlūl's refusal of British demands for reparations, Zaghlūl's government was dissolved. Two Wafdists (Ahmad Maher Bey, a Minister of Education under Zaghlūl, and Muhammad an-Nuqrashi Pasha, an Under-Secretary of the Interior) were implicated in the assassination, but a controversial court trial exonerated them.²³ The Wafd rebounded against British and monarchic pressure, succeeding to elect Zaghlūl as President of the Chamber of Deputies in March 1925. In the elections of May 1926 the Wafd gained 144 of 201 seats in the Chamber of Deputies.²⁴ Zaghlūl, however, was blocked from taking his rightful position as Prime Minister, and 'Adli Yeghen assumed the position.

In the Chamber Zaghlūl used his eloquence and prestige to guide the deputies into realistic and constructive debate and legislation—such as he was not able to accomplish as Prime Minister. In its 1926 session the Wafdist Parliament declared null and void the decrees promulgated outside of Parliament during the Ahmad Zīwar

²³ RIIA, Survey of International Affairs, 1925, op. cit., p. 225.

²⁴ Election results with commentary were published in the "Times" of May 27, 1926.

ministry (palace-dominated), which lasted from November 1924 to June 1926.²⁵ The Financial Committee criticised Palace expenses as being extravagant, and raised the Civil Service budget to tenfold the 1914 allocation. According to the Journal Officiel, the 1926 Parliament passed laws reducing foreign diplomatic expenditures, improving research on cotton-growing, and launching an anti-malaria campaign. Although a comprehensive labor law was stalled in Parliament, at least one old law (of 1909) was given extended application, forbidding children less than nine years old to work in cotton, tobacco, and cigarette factories.

On August 23, 1927 Sa'd Zaghlūl founder of the Wafd and "Father of Egyptian Nationalism" died. His house in Cairo, beit ul-ummah, became the Party headquarters, with Madame Zaghlūl wielding considerable influence. In September 19 the Party Executive issued a manifesto declaring that the principles of their deceased leader would be continued.²⁶ On September 26 a general

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A full list of cabinets, seats in Parliament by parties, and length of governments appears in Marcel Colombe, L'évolution de l'Égypte 1924-1950, Maisonneuve, Paris, 1951, Appendice III. For the work of the 1926 Wafdist government, see Colombe, pp. 199-201.

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Royal Institute of International Affairs, Survey, 1928, Oxford, London, p. 270.

party meeting ratified the manifesto and elected Muṣṭafā an-Naḥḥās as President of the Wafd.²⁷ Naḥḥās, a Wafdist from its beginning and a nominee of Amin Yusuf in 1918, had been a secretary and confidant of Zaghlūl for several years.²⁸ Yet some writers believe that at the time of his election to the presidency he was only a "figure-head".²⁹ Amin Yusuf, for one, speaks quite well of Naḥḥās, writing in retrospect from 1940:

From 1927 to 1936 he led with real success, though he could not be regarded as equal to Zaghlūl Pasha in ability or intelligence. But he was recognized to be straightforward, honest and just, and from the very beginning of his office his success did away with all opposition to him.³⁰

Naḥḥās came to power as Prime Minister for a few months from March to June in 1928. His cabinet included

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Amin Yusuf, op. cit., p. 157. Heikal reports that Fakhri Bey Abdun Nur and Makram 'Ubaid were the most influential Wafdist in securing Naḥḥās' nomination as President of the Wafd in succession to Zaghlūl, Mudhakirat, op. cit., p. 279.

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Ibid.

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Sidney N. Fisher in The Middle East: A History, Knopf, New York, 1959, characterizes Naḥḥās as a "figure-head" at the time of his election to the Presidency of the Wafd-p. 454.

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Amin Yusuf, op. cit., p. 157.

such eminent Wafdists as Wasif Butros Ghali Pasha (Foreign Minister), Ali ash-Shamsi Pasha (Minister of Public Education), and Makram 'Ubaid Efendi (Minister of Communications).³¹ One of the major pieces of legislation by the Wafdist Parliament was a bill on freedom of popular assembly, offered as a revision of the 1923 Law No. 14.³² Indeed, all legislation from the pre-constitutional era was coming up piece by piece for confirmation, amendment or repeal. The British regarded the freedom of assembly bill as harmful to public security and Chamberlain instructed Lord Lloyd to protest the bill as "reckless". In the ensuing conflicting interests, legislation on the Règlement Intérieur was postponed: the motion would have had the village headmen elected by franchised villagers, not appointed by the Minister of Interior; disciplinary matters would be handled by local committees, not by the provincial government (where bribery could be used effectively, when matters were not known first-hand).³³

Just as he was envious of Zaghlūl, so King Fu'ad resented Nahḥās' authority. Soon he had published some

³¹ Colombe, op. cit., Appendice 111.

³² RIIA, Survey, 1928, op. cit., p. 270

³³ Ibid., p. 275.

documents purporting to prove Naḥḥās guilty of legal malpractice.³⁴ Although acquitted, his prestige suffered a momentary drop, cabinet ministers resigned, and Fu'ad dismissed Naḥḥās on June 25. Thereafter, Muhammad Mahmud governed Egypt as a dictator after having Parliament dissolved and the 1923 Constitution suspended for three years.

A Labour Government in England in July 1929 somewhat shifted Colonial policy, putting in a more lenient High Commissioner, Sir Percy Lorraine, who allowed Naḥḥās to return to power. In the elections on December 20, 1929 the Wafd secured 198 of 232 seats, and Naḥḥās ruled as Prime Minister until June of that year.³⁵ In Parliament the most noteworthy Wafdist legislation was a set of protective tariffs which increased national income and encouraged local industries. A bill proposing foundation of an Agricultural Credit Bank did not become law, because of Naḥḥās' resignation before the King could approve the bill.³⁶ When treaty negotiations broke down, the Palace and the Residency engineered Naḥḥās' resignation, installing an oppressive dictator, Isma'il Sidqi. With his

³⁴ Ibid., p. 276.

³⁵ Oriente Moderno, 1930, vol. 10, pp. 33-34.

³⁶ Landau, op. cit., p. 184.

ad hoc political group, the People's Party, as allied with some Unionists and independents, Sidqi brought in the new Constitution of 1930, giving Fu'ad extremely wide prerogatives; the regime passed an electoral law designed to diminish Wafdist representation.³⁷

From 1930-1933 Fu'ad, who had gained ascendancy over the Wafd, amassed a great personal fortune through the operations of his Controller of the Royal Estates, al-Ibrashi, whose wide political influence grew as the King's health declined.³⁸ A kind of repressed order was maintained for the longest period in the half-century:

Sidqi sent the students back to their studies; politicians muttered rather meekly; and the wealthy land-owners gladly supported the new rule, for they were surfeited with petty quibbling, jealous vindictiveness, and political arrogance of the nationalist Wafd lawyers whom they had largely created.³⁹

In particular, the Wafd underwent systematic persecution.⁴⁰

³⁷ Loi Electorale du 19 Decembre 1935, Décret-Loi No. 148 du 1935 (Le Caire, Imprimerie Nationale, Boulac, 1935) as reprinted in Helen Davis, op. cit.

³⁸ Marlowe, op. cit., p. 299, note 5.

³⁹ S.N. Fisher, op. cit., p. 456.

⁴⁰ H.A.R. Gibb has written a very perceptive article on the Wafd and Egypt in 1936, "The Situation in Egypt" in International Affairs (May-June, 1936), pp. 351-373. He mentions the persecution of the Wafd by Sidqi and stresses the Wafd's undeniable popularity.

Although on good terms with the Nassīm government after Sidqi, when the Wafd finally returned to power in 1936, it had received many hard knocks and perhaps had lost much of its original momentum.

By the time it brought about its restoration after Sidqi's challenge, the party had been out of office for seven years in succession, except for a very brief spell, its Treasury had been exhausted, its ranks depleted, and its confidence in popular agitation badly shaken.⁴¹

No doubt this frustration at having its legal power and voters' mandate time and again nullified by Fuad's dissolution of government or Parliament crippled the Wafd in its effectiveness. While in office the Wafd was so harassed that it had no time to legislate comprehensively; in opposition under thinly-veiled palace governments or dictatorships it had no access to power to implement whatever domestic plans it had, admittedly not very specific or far-reaching. Reform within Parliament, for more effective representation and deliberation, was perhaps its major accomplishment during the 1920's and 1930's. Moreover, it promoted "political socialization", getting professional classes and students accustomed to interest articulation. Within the party some measure of interest aggregation was obtained, considering that the

⁴¹

Nadav Safran, Egypt in Search of a Political Community, Harvard, Cambridge, 1962, p. 191.

party did hold together well after Zaghlūl's death. Gibb pays tribute to the party cohesiveness as he observed it in 1936:

"The Wafd, as the first and the best organized (political party), is certainly the strongest numerically, and the remarkable way in which it has maintained itself since the death of Zaghlūl Pasha and under the difficult circumstances of the years 1930 to 1934 is a sufficient tribute to the strength of its organization and the loyalty of its supporters.

Though it has lost many of its followers in recent years, it still enjoys the support of the immense majority of daily and weekly journals, it understands the value of propaganda, and is undoubtedly regarded as the constitutional party par excellence. But it is composed of a right wing and a left wing, whose differences of view are sometimes reconciled with difficulty. The leader of the party, Mustafa Pasha an-Nahhās, has the reputation of being a moderate man, and rather too easily influenced by others, but he is universally respected for his integrity".⁴²

Another commentator, Lacouture, gives the Wafd additional credit for its pluralism and secularism: it brought into its ranks diverse elements of the population and did not stress Islamic consciousness in politics.⁴³ No doubt that the Copts had high representation in the party, including one or two ministers in the Wafdist governments; wealthy Coptic landlords were known to have subsidized the party activities. On the issue of party unity, defections of influential figures was regrettable but perhaps

⁴² H.A.R. Gibb, op. cit.

⁴³ Jean and Simone Lacouture (trans. Francis Scarfe), Egypt in Transition, Criterion, New York, 1958, pp. 90-91.

inevitable due to basic conflicts of interest. One may also ascribe the party split to a clash between ~~some~~ accomodationists and non-accomodationists with Britain. Some wanted a faster deliverance of full independence than others and so initiated a more aggressive and violent internal policy. At any rate, the Wafd on the domestic scene, for whatever reasons, had little to show for its two years in office over three stretches in the period before 1936. It had upheld nationalism and independence, but needed to prove how this could benefit the internal situation of Egypt.

CHAPTER II

THE POLITICS OF THE WAFD, 1936-1939

The year 1936 was a landmark in modern Egyptian history: King Fu'ad's death in April, the treaty signed with Britain in August, and the resultant undisputed (if short-lived) hegemony of the Wafd, now that its two principal foes were removed from the domestic scene. As in past free elections the Wafd triumphed in May, gaining 166/232 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and a 62/79 majority in the Senate.¹ Muṣṭafa an-Naḥḥas became Prime Minister with an all-Wafdist cabinet.²

Previously Naḥḥas had strengthened his personal position by becoming Chairman of the all-party delegation (with seven Wafdist members) negotiating the Treaty. By a 202-11 vote the Wafdist-dominated Chamber of Deputies and the Wafdist Senate by 109-7 ratified the Treaty; thereby the military occupation status that Egypt had been under was replaced with internal independence and a twenty-year alliance with Britain. For the preceding months the Treaty negotiations had been a subject of intense party rivalry, each trying to outdo the other

¹ "Times", May 9, 1936.

² "al-Ahram", May 11, 1936. See "al-Gihad", May 11, 1936 for biographies of some of the ministers. See Colombe, op. cit., Appendix.III, p. 339 for a list of the cabinet.

in extravagance of demands, the Wafd being among the more moderate. In November 1935 the Wafd had almost lost control of the situation, as during the mass student demonstrations wherein several hundred were wounded, while a strike disrupted Cairo and the other large cities. After signing the Treaty, however, the Wafd regained its hold, although a few extreme nationalists thought that the Wafd had "betrayed its trust".

Some provisions of the Treaty concerned the domestic rather than the foreign policy of Egypt and may be regarded as part of the Wafdist achievements in internal affairs.³ No doubt that nearly complete independence was attained, with only some reservations on Egyptian sovereignty, and was recognized internationally by Egypt's entrance into the League of Nations in March 1937. The progressive abolition of the Capitulations began (Article 13), with the consular tribunals changing into mixed tribunals, and the steady abolition of British fiscal privileges. The Montreux convention in March 1937 ended the Capitulations, effective from October 1937. The number and zoning of British troops was fixed, not to exceed 10,000 soldiers and 400 pilots, who were to remain in their military zones. The Egyptian Government also pledged to construct a network of roads, bridges, and

³ For the text of the Treaty see the Egypt White Book No. 1 (1936), Cmd. 5270, London.

railways (Annex to Article 8), useful more for troop movements than for Egyptian communication facilities between economic markets. Naḥḥas personally staked his prestige on the benefits of the Treaty, pronouncing many speeches in Parliament and outside to argue its merits. Of course, the Wafd Central Committee approved the Treaty in full, when they met on October 20, 1936.⁴ It was no small political feat for the Wafd to win over the opposition parties, who had earlier expressed their dissatisfaction or at least grave reservations.

In the Speech from the Throne, which he read to Parliament on May 23, 1936, Naḥḥas presented the ambitious program of his Wafdist Ministry.⁵ He declared:

The Government will care particularly for the interests of the fallahin and the workers, source of the national prosperity, because this class of people wants to receive profits proportional to the work performed.

The program put forward proposals to do the following tasks:

- abolish the ghaffir (village night watchman) tax, which had been much abused, and to fix his salary, taken from the stamp tax, at no more than LE. 10 per month.

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"al-Ahram" October 21, 1936.

⁵
The Speech from the Throne appears in "al-Ahram" May 24, 1936 and is translated into Italian in Oriente Moderno 1936 vol. 16, pp. 353-354, whence the English of the text here.

- review legislation on mortgage debts and dealings between debtors and creditors.
- institute a Bank of Industrial Credit, with inducements for foreign investors.
- review the land tax, and establish a commission under the Ministry of Finance to investigate the basis of the tax and fix local land values.
- pass legislation lessening legal and conventional interests on loans.
- stabilize the stamp tax (daribah ad-damghah).
- pass a new tariff law.
- sell the reclaimed state land north of the Delta to farmers at a modest price.
- draw up a land register for 1,667,000 feddans.
- declare a general amnesty for political prisoners from 1930 (except for murderers).

Other proposals foresaw extended authority for provincial councils; suppression of the corvée (Arabic; sukhrah - impressed village labor), building a modern prison in the 'Abbasiyah quarter of Cairo; construction of sanatorium for drug addicts; establishment of model villages; repairing of dams; starting an electrical project at Aswan; and building new schools and new communication facilities.

Although Nahhas characterized King Faruq, then eighteen years old, as a "constitutional King by character and education", he intended to keep close watch over him. Nahhas tried to have the post of Head of the Royal Cabinet

filled by a person nominated by the Wafdist Minister of the Palace, Senator Mahmūd Bey Khalīl.⁶ The Wafdist deputy 'Abdul Faṭṭāh aṭ-Ṭawīl was later named Under-Secretary for Palace Affairs.⁷ As for the Regency Council (majlis al-wiṣayah), it functioned feebly, having as members Muhammad 'Ali (Faruq's uncle) as President, and 'Abdul 'Aziz 'Izzat and Muhammad Sharīf Ṣabri Pasha as members.⁸

The Wafd consolidated itself by placing the following officials in the Chamber of Deputies: President- Ahmad Maher; Vice Presidents- Kāmal Ṣidqi Bey and 'Ali Hussein Pasha; Whips (murāqibūn)- Ibrahim 'Abd al-Hadi, Abdul Hamid Abdul Haqq, and Mahmūd Suleiman Ghannām. The Senate (majlis ash-shuyūkh) held the following officers: Vice Presidents- Mahmūd Khalīl Bey and Hassan Nabih al-Miṣri Bey; Whips- 'Ali Bey Abdur Rāziq, Ahmad Bey 'Abduh, and 'Abbas al-Gamāl.⁹

The parliamentary session from March to September

⁶ "al-Ahram" June 28, 1936

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ "Times", May 9, 1936

⁹ "al-Ahram", May 23, 1936.

occupied itself exclusively with affairs of the national budget. However, one significant labor law was passed, not having an immediate effect but establishing a principle and precedent for future legislation: Law No. 64 of 1936 declared the right of workmen to receive compensation for industrial accidents. Not until Law No. 86 of 1942 was insurance by companies against work accidents made compulsory, so that workers could be guaranteed compensation.¹⁰ The Wafdist floor leader and whip Abdul Hamid Abdul Haqq advocated the abolition of the waqf ahli (family religious estates inherited tax free), and submitted a bill in the 1936 session, but was unable to get the bill enacted.¹¹ The Journal Officiel of 1936 recorded not much legislation, but rather federal determinations (especially of constituencies), bestowals of titles, Ministry of Finance tax assessments; centralization was so dominant that even the simplest provisions for construction projects (bridges, roads, public buildings) had to be authorized by central authorities, perhaps even a

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M.T. Audsley, "Labour and Social Affairs in Egypt". St. Antony's Papers No. 4: Middle Eastern Affairs, Number 1, Chatto and Windus, London, 1958.

¹¹

Gabriel Baer, "Waqf Reform in Egypt", St. Antony's Papers No. 4, op. cit.

Minister.

The second session of the Sixth Parliament opened on November 21, 1936, when Naḥḥas restated the Wafdist program announced in May.¹² In addition, the Chamber directed the Government to carry out a population census every ten years, beginning in 1937. It decided also to have reconstructed and cleared the irrigation canals (qanātīr) originally built by Muhammad 'Ali. Indeed, the largest single expenditure of the 1937-38 state budget was for irrigation- LE. 622,000.¹³ The next highest expenditure was for national defense, for the Wafd Government wanted to increase the Egyptian Army from 10,000 to 20,000 men (under their new General Mahmūd Shukri Pasha) during their term of office.¹⁴ As well, the police force, always a useful tool in the hands of a régime, was to be increased and the foreign officers dismissed and replaced

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"al-Ahram", November 22, 1936.

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Oriente Moderno, 1937, vol. 17, p. 156, extract from Egyptian press, February 1, 1937.

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"al-Balagh", November 10, 1936 gives the present number of the Egyptian armed forces; "Times", February 12, 1937 reports the increase envisaged by Naḥḥas.

with Egyptians.¹⁵

When Faruq was invested as King in July, 1937, Naḥḥas presented the resignation of his cabinet following the constitutional practice. In August he constituted a new cabinet containing the big chiefs of the Wafd, many held over from the previous cabinet.¹⁶ Mahmud Fahmi an-Nuqrashi, an original Wafdist; but one more and more estranged from it, was dropped as Minister of Communications; moreover, he had conflicted with Makram 'Ubaid on ministerial matters. The two Copts continued in their positions: 'Ubaid as Minister of Finance (and Secretary-General of the Party) and Wasif Butros Ghali Pasha as Foreign Minister. The Minister of Waqf Affairs was Maḥmūd Basyūni, former President of the Senate and recently leader of the pilgrimage (amīr al-ḥajj), Minister of Commerce and Industry was 'Abd as-Sālim Gum'ah Pasha, member of the Wafd Executive Committee, as was Aḥmad Saif an-Naṣr, Minister of War and Navy; Muḥammad Ṣabri Abu-'Alam, Minister of Justice, was the former editor of a law review. 'Abd al-Faṭṭāḥ at-Ṭawīl, Minister of Hygiene, was a former head of the lawyers' syndicate in Alexandria and then parliamentary undersecretary. The Wafdist Parliamentary Committee, with 164 members in

¹⁵ "al-Ahram", February 20, 1937.

¹⁶ Oriente Moderno 1937, vol. 17, p. 462.

attendance, met on August 4 to confirm and support this strong Wafdist cabinet.¹⁷ The Wafd Executive Committee increased its strength by adding 11 new members, replacing those deceased from the original number, and then nominated its parliamentary leaders, many repeated from the last session.¹⁸

¹⁷ "al-Ahram", August 5, 1937.

¹⁸ "al-Ahram", September 16 and 25, 1937.

The Wafd Executive that approved the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 on October 20, 1936 included the following: Naḥḥas (President), Mahmud Basyuni, Hamdi Saif an-Nasr Pasha, Mustafa Bakir Bey, Ahmad Maher, Kamal Sidqi Bey, Mahmud al-Atrabi Pasha, Makram 'Ubaid Pasha (Secretary-General), Hamid Mahmud, Muhammad Yusuf Bey, Abd as-Salam Fahmy Gum'ah Pasha, Mahmud Nuqrashi, and Muhammad ash-Shinawy.

(as listed in "al-Ahram", October 21, 1936)

By September 1937 quite a few had been dropped: Bakir, Mamduh Riyad, Ibrahim Sid Ahmad.

The eleven new members added were: Muhammad Sabri Abu 'Alam (Minister of Justice), Abdul Fattah at-Tawil (Minister of Hygiene), Yusuf Ahmad al-Gindi (Under-Secretary of the Interior), Muhammad al-Wakil Pasha (Senator), Muhammad al-Maghazi Pasha (Senator), Bishri Hanna Pasha (Copt), Muhammad Hifni at-Tarazi Pasha (Senator), Muhammad Kamal 'Alma Pasha (Senator), Ahmad Mustafa Amr Pasha (Senator), Fahmy Wisā Bey (Copt), and Sayyid Bahnas Bey (Deputy).

The new members swore allegiance to the Council Committee with the following oath:

"I swear by Almighty God to fulfill my functions in the Egyptian Wafd with conscientiousness and fidelity, as one of its members, under the presidency of Mustafa an-Naḥḥas Pasha and in conformity with the basic principles of our leader of eternal memory, the late Sa'd Zaghlūl Pasha, with devotion to his leadership of the Wafd, loyal to my colleagues, obedient to the laws, not revealing the secrets of our discussion and not sparing force and sacrifice to serve our beloved country and the principles of the renaissance for which the Wafd has worked and fought".

(as taken "al-Ahram", September 16, 1937).

So, for at least a year the Wafdist Government rode high, crushing opposition and consolidating its position. It acquired a reputation for arbitrarily transferring or dismissing civil servants and judges for political reasons- the spoils system that other régimes had followed with equal fervor. When the bad publicity began to sting too much, the Wafdist Parliament even imposed press censorship in October 1937- by a law which it had attacked in 1929. The newspapers "al-Gihād" and "al-Balāgh" criticized the Government not only for its favoritism but for its haughty dismissal of other points of view (i.e. the opposition's); its indifference to demands of teachers for a salary increase and consideration as a professional class - not as mere government employees; and an onerous fund for national defense, accumulated by deductions from civil service salaries.¹⁹ Yet the Wafd held out promises of other reforms. On November 18, 1937 King Faruq's speech, read by Naḥḥas, opened the Parliament, promising on the domestic scene: reform of the 1895 law on village omdahs (mayors) and sheikhs, having them elected directly by the villagers; reforming local government, especially the provincial councils (majlis al-mudiriyah); reforming the stamp law and prison system.²⁰

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"Times", March 1, 1937; "al-Balāgh", March 3, 1937.

²⁰

"al-Muqaṭṭam", November 18, 1937.

Soon the Wafd's authority began to tangle with the royal prerogative. Nahhas disagreed with Faruq and his advisers on matters of appointing senators and even ministers. The Wafd had objected to one of the senators nominated by the King, and Faruq objected to the appointment of Yūsuf al-Gindi as Minister of Education; instead, Nahhas appointed him Under-Secretary in the Ministry of Interior in charge of public security.²¹ They disagreed over the doings of the youth leagues and over the influence of al-Azhar in politics. The Wafd was bringing up a bill to safeguard the Constitution: requiring that a Prime Minister who does not have a parliamentary majority must hold general elections within three months (as provided in the Constitution) or face judicial proceedings taken against him and a long prison term if convicted. Such a bill, proposed in 1930 and bitterly opposed by Fu'ad on the grounds that it implied an automatic lack of confidence in a Prime Minister named by the King, had been one reason for the Wafdist fall in June of that year. In October 1937 Faruq appointed Ali Maher, an original Wafdist but then an anti-Wafdist and previous collaborator (as Minister of Justice) in the Sidqi dictatorship of 1930, as Chief

²¹This dispute between Nahhas and Faruq and others also are mentioned in Philip Graves' article, "The Story of the Egyptian Crisis" in Nineteenth Century, March 1938, and its sequel in May 1938 of the same monthly periodical.

of the Royal Cabinet. This office he was able to make extremely influential, in the teeth of bitter Wafdist opposition. The rift between King and Wafd widened.

Ali Maher, working with other Wafdist defectors like Nuqrashi as well as other parties of the opposition, set to work undermining the Wafd. As one weapon against Nahhas government, the Bourse (Stock Exchange) could easily be manipulated by bankers and financiers, often foreigners or a plutocracy likewise dependent on the monarchy or British or opposition. Also student groups, often from al-Azhar or from certain faculties of Fu'ad I (Cairo) University, demonstrated or were incited to demonstrate against the Wafd. Once on December 21 al-Azhar students rioted against Makram 'Ubaid, damaging his car in front of 'Abdin Palace, and were dispersed only by Faruq's appearance at his balcony. In January 1938 a large body of Cairo University law students stormed a meeting in the Court of Appeals. The students were militating for Muhammad Ali Pasha Allouba to be elected naqib of the Egyptian Bar Association, against the Wafdist candidate, Kamal Sidqi Bey. Only with armed police in attendance during the afternoon of the same day were the nearly 1000 lawyers able to name Sidqi.²²

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"Times", January 1, 1938.

The Wafd tried to meet these challenges posed against them. On December 23, 1937 an Executive Meeting was held, with the ailing Naḥḥas attending in pyjamas; they reaffirmed Wafdist loyalty to the Crown but declared their opposition to any other government or cabinet but Naḥḥas'.²³ The next day the Wafdist deputies and senators convened, expressing their complete confidence in Naḥḥas' government and resolving that "any Wafdist who supports another cabinet will be expelled from the Party".²⁴ Of those present 218 of 221 approved the resolution. In particular it was aimed at Dr. Ahmad Maher, who was thought ready to form a new ministry. In January the expulsion provision was enforced, dismissing from the Party Ahmad Maher, Nuqrashi, and Hāmid Mahmūd. In a letter to "al-Ahram" Naḥḥas denied that Nuqrashi and Maher were members of the Wafd at the time of Zaghlūl but were nominated members of the Executive in 1937; Hāmid Mahmūd was nominated in 1932.²⁵ Then, defending himself against

²³ "al-Ahram", November 18, 1937.

²⁴ "Times", December 23, 1937.

²⁵ "al-Ahram", January 8, 1938.

attacks as being disloyal to the King, Naḥḥas declared at a Wafdist meeting in Port Sa'id:

This statement is categorically false and has aimed at causing dissension between the Crown and the Wafd, between the Nation and the Crown. We, Nation and Wafd, consider the Crown as a symbol of our independence and we cannot permit any conflict to arise between us.²⁶

On December 30 Faruq made his move and dismissed Naḥḥas, citing as reasons his loss of popular support, failure to protect public liberties, and deviation from the spirit of the Constitution.²⁷ Muhammad Mahmud was invested as Prime Minister. During an uproarious meeting of the Chamber of Deputies, when the lights were turned off at Dr. Maher's orders as President, Naḥḥas read a motion of no confidence in the new cabinet; then Maher had police clear the Chamber. In the Senate a resolution of no confidence was passed with only three dissents. In February the Chamber was dissolved in preparation for the coming elections. Although like most British sources critical of the Wafd's internal administration, the "Times" admitted the Wafd's popularity at this juncture and likely victory in the elections:

²⁶ "al-Ahram", January 17, 1938.

²⁷ "Times", December 31, 1937.

In the event of a general election the Wafd would no doubt carry the day, thanks to their superior organization and the prestige which they have gained from the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty - for which they have taken the chief credit, although the Egyptian Treaty delegation was an all-party one - and the abolition of the Capitulations.²⁸

The Wafd also judged itself strong in popular favor, and in a Parliamentary Wafd Congress of 232 delegates rejected a motion to boycott the elections and decided instead merely to present a petition to the King protesting the intimidations of Muhammad Mahmud's government.²⁹ Elections took place on March 31 in Upper Egypt and on April 2 in Lower Egypt, marked not only by heavy campaigning but by violent incidents, costing at least twelve lives. Going under the bloc name of Nationalists, a Liberal-Constitutionalist-Shaabist-Ittihad coalition gained an overwhelming majority - 143 seats; the Sa'dists reaped 104 seats; Independents numbered 80; and the Wafdists saved only 15 seats, 12 of which from

²⁸ "Times", December 23, 1937 This forecast appears ironic in view of the actual election results four months later. If the Times' estimation of the Wafd's popularity at the time was correct, then one would believe that the elections were indeed "rigged", as the Wafdists claimed. But what else could they claim after such a defeat!

²⁹ "al-Ahram", March 14, 1938.

Lower Egypt.³⁰ Nearly all the Wafdist chiefs fell from power: Naḥḥas, 'Ubaid, Basyuni, and three former Ministers, Zaki 'Urabi, Hilali Bey, and 'Uthman Muharram Pasha. Many of the Wafdists - 130 in all - even lost their deposits of LE. 150 for having failed to win a tenth of the votes cast in their constituencies.³¹

This abject failure of the Wafd, so soon after it had come to undisputed power, could be attributed to several causes. No doubt that the defections from its ranks by eminent personalities weakened party unity and damaged its reputation. When so many associates of Zaghlūl left the Party, the original mystique was bound to suffer. Secondly, Faruq's influence and popular esteem grew quickly, due to his marriage with Farīdah Dhu al-Fiqār in January, his religiosity, his donations to charity, his Egyptian character (being the first of the Alid dynasty to speak Arabic well and enjoy mingling with the people). Wafdist antagonism with the Crown, despite their statements to the contrary, probably did earn the Wafd some popular disfavor. Third, the 1938 election may not have been so freely conducted, following the past pattern of palace-government manipulations. Finally, perhaps the Wafd had not taken advantage of its term of office to promote

³⁰"al-Ahram", April 1-4, 1938.

³¹"al-Balagh", April 5, 1938.

actively the general welfare, giving the population material benefits as well as promises.³² However, the general instability of the internal political situation, the multiplicity of conflicting interests, none strong enough to predominate for long, could account for many turn-about in the political struggle. Heyworth-Dunne notes this unstable situation, and as well blames the Wafd's own vulnerability and looseness as partly responsible for their demise:

In the period between 1923 and 1940 Egypt had seventeen different ministries, thirteen of which were put into power by the Palace, although not one of them had a majority following. The popular party, known as the Wafd, came to power four times during this period, with a huge majority, only to be dismissed or forced to resign by the Palace, each time thus demonstrating to the people the indisputable weakness of their political and constitutional structure.³³

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Graves, op cit., takes this view also, i.e. that the Wafd was basically ineffective in office; likewise the various RIIA studies, John Marlowe, Anglo-Egyptian Relations 1800 - 1953, London, Cresset, 1954; and George Kirk in his various books. A study of the Journal Officiel and the legislation, however, shows the Wafd more productive in legislation than has been considered by the British, as the various bills cited in this thesis indicate. The effectiveness and execution of the legislation is the real point in question.

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James Heyworth-Dunne, Religious and Political Trends in Modern Egypt, Washington, 1950, p.vi.

Meeting to recuperate from the disaster, the Wafd Parliamentary Group protested against the elections, declaring that they did not represent the will of the Nation, and that the regime had used police intimidation. Indeed, according to a well-informed British commentator, the Government had taken certain "preparations" for the election that had crippled the Wafd.³⁴ The Chamber of Deputies was enlarged by 32 new seats, according to the population increase found by the first census, and the gerrymandering of the new constituencies was obvious. Furthermore, the Government had held the elections first in Upper Egypt, a poorer and more rural area where intimidation was especially effective and where the Wafd was weaker than in the Delta; then the election returns, showing the Wafdist losses, were immediately published and spread to Lower Egypt, disheartening the Wafdist voters there. Still another device was the Government's monopolising all means of transportation on the election day, and controlling movement as they wished.

In an effort to improve their organization, the Wafd decided to recompose their provincial committees and reshape their Executive Committee to represent more proportionately the provinces. To gain public support

³⁴Philip Graves, op. cit., May 1938, p. 582.

they stepped up the campaign against the British, whom they blamed for intervention in the elections.³⁵ Though helpless in the Chamber of Deputies, the Wafdists still held on to the Senate with a plurality (68/140). Led ably by Yusuf al-Gindi they relentlessly assailed government policies.

The combined forces of monarchy, British, and minority parties proved too much for Wafdist resistance. Faruq's prestige rose greatly, till he had the presumption to proclaim himself caliph in January of 1939. His palace government bore down hard on the Wafd. A Wafd National Congress, scheduled for November 1938, was postponed to April 1939; however, even at that time the Government decided to prohibit the Congress from meeting, citing as a reason the seriousness of the international situation.³⁶

In the spring of 1939 Egypt suffered internally from the consequences of an adverse trade balance in 1938, falling cotton prices, rising defense costs, and Axis propaganda.³⁷ The Budget of 1938 was unpopular because

³⁵ RIIA, Great Britain and Egypt 1914-1951, London, 1952, p. 54. For a sharply anti-British speech by Nahhas, see "al-Ahram", November 14, 1938.

³⁶ "al-Ahram", April 12, 1939.

³⁷ RIIA, Great Britain and Egypt, op. cit., p. 58.

of its tight economies, including a 16% reduction in salaries. The Wafd in opposition used these grievances as a basis for strong attacks on government policies. In July Naḥḥas went in for a personal attack, accusing Ahmad Maher, then Minister of Finance, of selling shares of the Bank of Commerce in an illegal manner, giving himself great monetary benefit.³⁸ This dispute became a case for a libel suit and constituted a cause célèbre during the summer and fall.

In August the Senate impeded Government legislation and even rejected the state budget, causing the resignation of Muhammad Mahmud's ministry. Ali Maher's new cabinet contained a surprising number of former Wafdists, showing the pool of disaffected politicians the opposition could draw upon: Muhammad Ali 'Allouba Pasha (left the Wafd in 1922); Nuqrashi (expelled in January 1938); Mahmūd Ghālib Pasha (left the Wafd in 1936); Hamid Mahmud (expelled in January 1938); Saba Habashy Bey (a Copt defector); Saiyid Abdur-Rahman Bey (left Wafd in 1932); and Ibrahim Abd al-Hadi (expelled in 1920).³⁹ In answer to continuing violent opposition from the Wafd newspaper, "al-Wafd al-Misri",

³⁸ "al-Ahram", July 7, 1939.

³⁹ Oriente Moderno, vol. 19, 1939, p. 510; also "al-Ahram", July 19, 1939.

the Public Prosecutor ordered a search of the houses of Naḥḥas, 'Ubaid, and the editors of the paper, Abdul Laṭīf Muhammad Ṣādiq, Aḥmad Qāsim Gawdah, and two editors of the other Wafdist paper, "al-Misri",⁴⁰

By this time World War II affairs overshadowed domestic politics, and the Wafd, by persecution as well as by preoccupation with foreign affairs, went into a relative seclusion. On September 2, 1939 martial law (al-ahkām al-'urfiya) was proclaimed, leading to even tougher enforcement of security measures, often directed against the Wafd and other opposition groups. In the Chamber of Deputies Abdul Hamid Abdul Haqq spoke for the Wafd, regretting that too wide powers had been conferred on the Prime Minister and that the Council of Ministers had too little control over the military; he objected also that press censorship covered more than military and security matters.⁴¹ The Wafd was forbidden to celebrate the National Struggle Day on November 13, under military regulations prohibiting large public gatherings. The Wafd, then, reduced its political agitation, weathering the international storm and waiting for some turn of fortune to give them access to power.

⁴⁰ "al-Ahram", July 24, 1939.

⁴¹ "al-Ahram", October 12, 1939.

CHAPTER III

FACTIONS OF THE WAFD, 1936 - 1939 :

THE SA'DISTS AND THE BLUESHIRTS

A. The Sa'dists

Within a few years after its formation in 1918 the Wafd was subjected to defections by several of its prominent political leaders, many of whom went on to found their own parties. Indeed, few were the influential politicians of the half-century who did not at some time and in some way have an association with the Wafd. Only the Nationalist Party, founded by Mustafa Kamil before World War I and continuing afterwards with minor influence, would be an exception and show a nearly completely autonomous development. Muhammad Mahmud, for example, was an original Wafdist and was deported to Malta with Zaghlul in 1919. Then in 1921 he seceded and in 1922 began the Liberal Constitutional Party (hizb al-ahrār ad-dustūriyyin), which was to become the principal opposition to the Wafd in the following decades. Later this Party was joined by still more original Wafdist: Muhammad Ali 'Allouba, Lutfi as-Saiyid, and Abdul-Aziz Fahmy.¹ Isma'il

¹Mahmud Zaiyid has made a study of the Liberal Constitutional Party, as it relates to the early Wafd, in "al-Abhāth" (A.U.B.), March 1963, pp. 35-52, "Nisha' Hizb al-Ahrar ad-Dusturiyyin fi Misr, 1922-1924". Some prominent members are listed in footnote 28, p. 51.

Sidqi likewise had been an original Wafdist, but defected in 1919 and allied with the Union Party; in 1930, when he formed an outright dictatorial regime, he established the People's Party (hizb ash-sha'ab).² Ali Maher, who quit the Wafd in 1921, became a leader in the Union (Ittihād) Party.

Hamad al-Bāsil, an original Wafdist and member of its Central Committee, and a prominent speaker on the Wafd's behalf began the first "Sa'dist" schism. In 1930 he seceded and with a few followers started the Sa'dist Party (al-hizb as-sa'di), later to become known as the Sa'dist Wafd, which claimed to recapture the orthodoxy of Sa'd Zaghlūl and abandon the deviations introduced by the Naḥḥas leadership.³

Although these party schisms and factions always endeavored to justify their formation by matters of principle, observers often considered that clashes of personalities were the basic reason. H.A.R. Gibb, for example, writing in 1936 found that

there is little difference between various party programs. All of them stand for complete independence,

² Sidney N. Fisher, The Middle East: A History, Knopf, New York, 1959, p. 456.

³ Marcel Colombe, L'évolution de l'Égypte, 1924-1950, Maisonneuve, Paris, 1951, p. 15; p. 72.

for constitutional government under a monarchy, and for a treaty with Great Britain, and none of them has any distinctive internal program. The differences between them are therefore personal.⁴

In the half-century of party contention, which perhaps covered up many common assumptions on domestic problems, only a short period of cooperation was achieved. For several months of 1935-1936 the National Front (al-jubhah al-wataniyah) prevailed, uniting the parties in their negotiations with Britain over the Treaty. In December 1935 the Sa'dist Party, with Hamad al-Bāsil as its President, took their place in the Front and signed a joint petition to King Fu'ad. In the 1936 elections the National Front was coordinating the parties, having an election committee distribute seats to the parties in proportion to their numerical strength. On the committee Ali Shamsi Pasha (a Minister of Education under Naḥḥas in 1926 and later President of the Egyptian National Bank-Banque Misr- for many years) represented the Sa'dists and obtained nine seats as their party's share, a number the Sa'dists were content with, unlike the other parties over their low proportions. Amongst some of the more prominent

⁴ H.A.R. Gibb, "The Situation in Egypt" in International Affairs, May-June, vol. 15, 1936, p. 355. cf George Kirk, A Short History of the Middle East (third edition), Methuen, London, 1955, p. 168, n.2.

Sa'dists at the time were: Fakhri Bey, Bahiuddin Barakat Bey, Murād ash-Shari'i Bey, Tafiq Hassan Efendi, and Rushdi al-Gazzar. In the elections of May 1936 only four of the Sa'dists were returned.⁵

In the spring of 1937 another faction began to appear within the Wafd. The hitherto Wafdist daily newspapers, "al-Gihād" and "al-Balāgh", criticized sharply the Nahhas government. In particular these two papers espoused the causes of civil servants, teachers, and the professional classes, many of whom felt themselves ignored or discriminated against by Nahhas and the Parliament. This discontent found a spokesman in Nuqrashi, an original Wafdist and at that time Minister of Communications in the Nahhas government. He was alleged to have had ministerial and personal antagonism with Makram 'Ubaid, right-hand man of Nahhas, Secretary-General of the Wafd, and at that time Minister of Finance. Nuqrashi particularly objected to exceptional civil service promotions, and to the award of a government contract to an English Company which would undertake the Aswan hydro-electric project. When the fifth Nahhas cabinet was formed in August 1937, Nuqrashi was conspicuously dropped in a gesture of personal disinterestedness in the emoluments of public office,

⁵ "Times" May 9, 1936.

Nuqrashi refused a subsequent government offer to join the Board of Directors of the Suez Canal.

In an open letter to "al-Ahram", Nuqrashi attacked Nahhas' government, saying that it did not represent diverse interests (being almost entirely Wafdist), that Nahhas was extravagant in expenses for public celebrations (as upon his return from Montreux in June), that the Wafdist youth league of the "Blue Shirts" continually menaced public order, and that Nahhas and his cabinet violated the articles and the spirit of the Constitution.⁶ One youth group, the Sa'dist Club (an-nadi as-sa'di) came to Nuqrashi's support and demonstrated for him, clashing with the Young Wafdists.⁷ Consequently, on September 12, 1937 Nuqrashi was expelled by the Wafdist Executive Committee, with only one dissent, that of Ahmad Maher. As immediate repercussions, a delegation from al-Azhar visited Nuqrashi to express their support on September 23, but on October 4 Nuqrashi's office was smashed up by squadrons of the Blue Shirts.

The dissension came to a head on January 3, 1938 during the opening session of the Chamber of Deputies.⁸

⁶ "al-Ahram", September 7, 1937.

⁷ "al-Balagh", September 11, 1937, as summarized in Oriente Moderno vol. 17, 1937, p. 581.

⁸ This critical session of the Chamber of Deputies is recorded in "al-Muqattam", January 4, 1938.

The Speaker of the Chamber, Dr. Ahmad Maher, although a nominal Wafdist himself, was known to have been at odds with the Wafd party leaders for several reasons. The campaign against Ali Maher, Chief of the Royal Cabinet and Ahmad's brother, had naturally antagonized him. Also he strongly opposed the expulsion of his close friend, Mahmud an-Nuqrashi, from the Wafd. Finally, his personal control of the Chamber had been greatly diminished by the workings of the Wafd Parliamentary Group. Now in this session Nahhas and the Wafd were trying to block the King's impending dissolution of the Wafd government; but when Nahhas asked for the floor, Maher refused him.

A stormy session followed, during which the journalists and visitors were first cleared from the gallery; then the lights were put out at Maher's directions, and the police were called in. Using a cigarette lighter to read by, Nahhas read a Wafd statement of protest. The following day Ahmad Maher, Nuqrashi, and Muhammad Mahmud issued a "Call to the Egyptian Nation", declaring their principles and making a critique of the Wafd.⁹ They recalled the nationalist struggle of Zaghlul and described its success until 1936 and Nahhas' third ministry. Then, the three dissidents claimed, Nahhas was "bewitched by

⁹ "al-Muqattam", January 5, 1938.

the fancy of Makram Pasha for a 'holy leadership'", this "wrongful innovation" leading him to "strike out at every upright advisor and attack every faithful counselor". They alleged that "the interests of the country were seized for his own desire and for the desires of his associates and relatives, weaklings, and flatterers". They accused Naḥḥas of setting up a dictatorial and even criminal regime, some of whose party members were charged with sympathies towards the People's or Union Parties. Several deputies and senators immediately answered the "Call" and aligned themselves with the seceders. Among the deputies were Ibrahim Abdul Hadi, Abdul Hadi al-Qasabi, Mamduḥ Riyāḍ (expelled from the Wafd Executive Committee in 1937), Hussein Muhammad al-Murāsy Bey; the following members of the Wafd Parliamentary Group resigned: Saiyid Abdur-Rahman, Yunis Ahmad Salīm, Muhammad Margoushi, Hamad Gawdah, and Sheikh Khalil Abu Rahnāb.¹⁰ In the days to come more deputies and delegations announced their support for the dissidents, while even more others declared their support for Naḥḥas. On January 5 the League of Civil Servants, with Amin 'Uthman as their spokesman, lent their support to the Sa'dists.

Dr. Maher did his best to give the impression

¹⁰

Ibid.

that the Sa'dist secession was a matter of principle, declaring that the Wafd "is not a collection of personalities but an ensemble of national principles, and all that deviate from them automatically dispel themselves".¹¹ Soon the Sa'dists rounded up about 50 deputies in support of their cause, men judged by the London "Times" correspondent to be from the Chamber's "most able and energetic members". But as for their program, the correspondent remarked that it was difficult to see at variance with that of Muhammad Mahmud's new government.¹²

In an answer to the "Call", Nahhas published a sharp counterattack on January 6.¹³ He claimed that Nuqrashi's defection, in fact if not in name, dated from his disagreement over negotiations with the British in 1930. Ahmad Maher, according to Nahhas, had drifted to the margin of the party as an inactive member. A long list of indictments against Maher for his conduct in the Chamber was enumerated. "Ahmad Maher brought in many secretaries and writers to his private offices in the Chamber of Deputies, all from his family, relatives and

¹¹ "Times", January 3, 1938.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ "al-Muqattam", January 6, 1938.

friends, with favoritism (maḥsūbiyah) unlike Sa'd Zaghlūl and myself, for the Presidents of past Chambers had only one secretary". Maher was also accused of paying exorbitant salaries to his retinue and practicing discrimination (istithna'at) in pay and rank, particularly in the railway department. Two days later the General Secretary of the Chamber, Muhammad Khuttāb, confirmed the existence of this patronage system.¹⁴ The Wafd Parliamentary Group, considerably diminished from its 223 members of the January 3 meeting, convened later on January 24 to reassess its strength - 162 members - express its congratulations to the King on his wedding, and declare its confidence in Naḥḥas and its steadfast opposition to the Sa'dists.¹⁵

Getting 88 seats in the Chamber of Deputies from the March elections, the Sa'dists proceeded to establish themselves in the Chamber, electing as President Bahiuddin Barakat, and as Vice Presidents Muhammad Tawfiq Khalil Bey and Muhammad Raghib Atiyyah Bey.¹⁶ In the Senate (maillis ash-shuyūkh) they had but 11 seats. In the cabinet formed by Muhammad Mahmud in June 1938 many Sa'dists came in:

¹⁴ "al-Muqattam", January 8, 1938.

¹⁵ "al-Muqattam", January 25, 1938.

¹⁶ "al-Ahram", March 13, 1938.

Dr. Ahmad Maher as Minister of Finance, Nuqrashi as Minister of Interior, Mahmud Ghalib Pasha as Minister of Communications, Hamid Mahmud (who had been Zaghlūl's personal doctor) as Minister of Public Hygiene, and Saba Habashi Bey (a Coptic lawyer) as Minister of Commerce and Industry.¹⁷ Financially the new Party was quite secure also, believed by one scholar to represent "certain financial interests".¹⁸ Its members were supposed to pay LE. 80 per year to the party coffers, which were estimated to have an account of LE. 15,000 as of July 1938 (as compared with LE. 20,000 for the Wafd.¹⁹

A brief statement of the Sa'dist Party program was formulated in June 1939 and published in "al-Balagh":²⁰

¹⁷ For complete information on the composition of cabinets, refer to Colombe, op. cit., Appendice III.

¹⁸ Jacob Landau, Parliaments and Parties in Egypt, Praeger, New York, 1954, p. 187. Landau says, "Although the (Sa'dist) secession was mainly caused by personal disagreements, the new party soon came to represent certain industrial interests as well".

¹⁹ "Akhir Sa'ah", July 17, 1938, as summarized in Oriente Moderno, vol. 18, 1938, p. 451.

²⁰ "al-Balagh", June 14, 1939, as translated into Italian in Oriente Moderno, vol. 19, 1939, p. 400 (author's translation into English).

"The Sa'dist Group (al-hai'ah as-sa'diyah) will follow in the footsteps of Sa'd Zaghlul to consolidate the independence of the country, observe the Constitution and apply its rules, preserve liberty, promote justice and equality, following a strictly democratic system which will accompany the national renaissance (nahḍah) and lead to progress.

Its aspirations aim to:

- 1) promote cooperation between Egyptians, gathering the forces of the people in order to accomplish the tasks of the recent renaissance;
- 2) prepare a young generation of sound body and strong character, armed with knowledge and faith;
- 3) set up a strong army for the defense of the country; reinforce the basis of Islam;
- 4) organize the affairs of the country, improving social and economic elements, caring for agriculture, industry and commerce, and providing for the interests of farmers and workers;
- 5) act to consolidate the bonds of alliance and friendship between Egypt and Great Britain, while reinforcing the bonds of affection and fraternity between Egypt and Eastern countries, and maintaining Egyptian relations with other foreign countries.

For its internal organization the Party was known to have an executive council (majlis al-idārah) and a President (Dr. Ahmad Maher) who holds office for a three year term (Dr. Maher held office for six years). In Ali Maher's cabinet of August 1939 the Sa'dists again held many ministries: Nuqrashi as Minister of Education, Mahmud Ghalib as Minister of Communications (again), Hamid Mahmud as Minister of Hygiene (again), Sābā Habashi

as Minister of Commerce and Industry (again) and Ibrahim Abdul Hadi as Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs.²¹

When martial law was declared in October of 1939 Mamdūh Riyād, Secretary of the Sa'dists in the Chamber of Deputies, declared the Sa'dists' support for the measure, which passed the Chamber (under the presidency of Ahmad Maher) in November.

B. The Blue Shirts

From the early days of the Wafd youths and students made up an articulate nationalist interest group. Until the mid-1930's, however, the students were unorganized as a political force, and kept within student associations having only sporadic influence. In 1932 a Wafdist deputy named Zuhair Şabri founded a League of Young Wafdists (ar-rābiṭat ash-shubbān al-wafdiyyin). In January of 1936 the first really ambitious youth political movement was formed, calling itself the "Blue Shirts" (al-qumsān az-zarqa'). It was apparently inspired from the Hitlerjugend of Nazi Germany, with their black shirts, and from the

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Colombe, loc. cit. One of the most eminent men of letters to join the Sa'dists, first as a writer for "al-Balagh" then as a Senator, was 'Abbas Mahmūd al-Aqqād, although this period of his career might be deemed "misanthropic" - Nadav Safran, Egypt in Search of a Political Community, Harvard, Cambridge, 1961, p. 137.

Brown Shirts of Mussolini. The fuehrerprinzip was also reflected in the Blue Shirts' stress on obedience to the za'im (leader). Yet perhaps an historical Arab counterpart could be found in the futuwwa movements, revived also in Iraq during the 1930's.

The leaders of the Wafd decided to make the Blue Shirts into a paramilitary organization with uniforms (blue shirts, gray trousers, ṭarbūsh), Roman salutes, banners, and division into squadrons (firaq) of eleven youths each.²² Moreover, this was hoped to become the basis for an Egyptian army. A medical student from the University of Cairo, Muhammad Bilāl, led one squadron of the 500 youths assembled, of whom 200 were from al-Azhar. Their oath of allegiance expressed loyalty to Egyptian nationalism, the Wafd, and the King.²³ Also serving as a sports organization, the Blue Shirts held a large sports match in Cairo with the participation of youth groups from all over the country. On the 10th of January, only several days after its founding, the Blue Shirts held a grand

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"Times", January 7, 1936. Several authors find a clearly Fascist inspiration and tendency in the Blue Shirts and Green Shirts. Note, for example, George Lenczowski's characterization in The Middle East in World Affairs (third edition), Cornell, Ithaca, 1962, p. 484. Also refer to Safran, op. cit., p. 192.

²³

"al-Ahram", January 7, 1936.

parade of 10 squadrons (two of which were composed of Azharites). But after the parade, Tawfiq Nessim as Premier and Minister of Interior forbade future public demonstrations of the squadrons, which had apparently worried the British officials witnessing the parade.²⁴

In April the Blue Shirts, led by Bilāl, and the League of Young Wafdists, led by Şabri, attempted to merge, resolve their differences and rivalry, and expand their membership to include workers as well as youths and students. The combined associations were put under the direction of a Command Council (mailis qiyādat al-firaq) composed of Wafdist leaders: Rafi' M. Rafi' (a lawyer), Hussein Muhammad as-Saiyid (lawyer), Abdul Aziz Efendi al-Gharr, Dr. Fahmy Suleiman, Shawqi Abdul Wahhab, and Mahmud Ahmad Ragib.²⁵ Thereafter, numbers of the Blue Shirts seemed to grow rapidly, for in June 1936, when Zaghlūl's body was transferred to a mausoleum, an estimated 15,000 students, mostly Blue Shirts, assembled for the ceremony; other estimates also indicated a numerical strength of 15-20,000.²⁶

²⁴ "al-Ahram", January 11, 1936.

²⁵ "al-Gihad", March 31, 1936.

²⁶ "Times", June 21, 1936; "Egyptian Gazette", October 21, 1936.

Until late 1936 the merger of the two youth leagues did not prove successful, so that the Wafd needed to issue a manifesto of reorganization.²⁷ Among its provisions were the following: allegiance to Naḥḥas as leader (za'im) of the nation; prohibition of carrying fire-arms; emphasis sporting and moral (rather than military) purposes; age restriction to between 10-30 years; and constitution of a new Command Council composed of: Col. Hafez Bey, Saiyid Bahnas Bey, Mikhail Ghali (lawyer), Zuhair Ṣabri, Mahmud Suleiman Ghannām (lawyer) and Muhammad Bilāl Efendi. Afterwards there was more unity of the ranks, so that a united Congress could be held in July, 1937 and resolutions (of a general nature) were passed. Even then, however, one faction led by Muhammad Kāmil aḍ-Ḍamati still contended with Bilāl's group. Also the League of Young Wafdists, with the lawyer Abdul Halīm Rafi' as President, still opposed Bilāl; at a meeting in the Sa'dist Club on September 10, 1937, they called for King Farūq to disband the Blue Shirts.²⁸ The Sa'dist newspaper "al-Balāgh" also led a campaign against the Blue Shirts, with whom the Azharite youths often clashed, as in the streetfight of October 24 involving a thousand

²⁷ "al-Ahram", December 6, 1936.

²⁸ "al-Ahram", September 11, 1937.

youths. ²⁹

To counterattack the opposition Bilāl made the Blue Shirts an even more militant group. In a new ordinance he expanded the squadrons to include employees and workers of the civil service, railways, and Imprimerie Nationale; a reserve army (al-gaish ar-radīf) was formed, and a police unit added with an officer in charge.³⁰ Opposition intensified from Muhammad Mahmud and the other parties and blocs against the Naḥḥas regime during 1936-1937. No doubt that the Blue Shirts did attack Naḥḥas' opponents, just as they ransacked Nuqrashi's office on October 4 after his expulsion from the Wafd. Furthermore, they made vociferous demonstrations whenever the Wafd leaders held public meetings, often going out of even Wafdist control, destroying property, and using purposeless violence on a mob basis. Such conduct would, of course, always anger British authorities who were so insistent on "law and order" even if repression was needed to enforce it.

Yet another opposition to the Blue Shirts came from the "Green Shirts" or the Association of Young Egypt

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"Times", November 25, 1937.

³⁰

"al-Balagh", November 5, 1937, as translated into Italian in Oriente Moderno, vol. 17, 1937, p. 584 (author's translation into English).

(gami'iyah misr al-fatāh), a movement directed by the self-styled socialist agitators, Ahmad Husain and Faṭḥī Radwān. Founded in 1933 and becoming a party in 1938, this movement had support from both the Palace and al-Azhar. It continually demonstrated against the Naḥḥas regime, and one of its members even tried to assassinate Naḥḥas in November 1937.³¹ According to its party program, the Party endeavored to promote Egyptian nationalism and even an imperium (imbirāṭūriyah), introduce economic reforms

31

Philip Graves, telling "The Story of the Egyptian Crisis" in Nineteenth Century, March 1938, recounts a typical violent clash between factions and youth groups. This incident came after the attempted assassination of Naḥḥas by one of the Green Shirts:

"The Greenshirts were a small body fostered by King Fuad as a counterpoise to the Blueshirts. It had become still smaller after his death and was kept alive with some difficulty by a few extreme Nationalists who disliked the Treaty, some religious enthusiasts, and, it was alleged, by foreign subventions. The would be assassin (Izzuddin Abdul Qadir) who had been helping the Palestine terrorists defended his action on the ground that the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty was a betrayal of Egyptian rights. The first result of the attempt was to rally support to Naḥḥas Pasha. Unhappily for him, Makram Pasha and Gindi Bey tried to exploit the crime by accusing very nearly all their chief opponents of having instigated it. A large number of persons were arrested, and bands of workmen from Government establishments, armed with crowbars and supported by Blue Shirts, attacked the houses of Mohamed Mahmud and other notables. They met the attack by calling up bands of Saidis armed with nabuts (metal-shod quarter staves) from their estates in Upper Egypt, and the ensuing tumults alarmed peaceful citizens and injured the Government's reputation". (p. 306).

such as industrialization and institution of a Central Bank, promote welfare, culture and religion.³² As empty as the other party programs, this one in practice meant xenophobia, demagoguery, and religious fanaticism, suggestive of the Muslim Brotherhood. Ahmad Husain was arrested many times. By January 1938 he could assemble a crowd of 5000 partisans, mostly al-Azharite students, for one of his harangues. On March 1938 King Faruq by a decree-law (marṣūm bi-qānūn) abolished both the Blue and Green Shirts and any other such paramilitary associations and Mohammad Mahmud as the new Prime Minister saw to their complete suppression.

32

The Party Program of "Young Egypt" is reproduced in Oriente Moderno, vol. 18, 1938, pp. 491-494.

CHAPTER IV

THE WAFD AND THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF EGYPT, 1936-1939

Even though before 1936 the Wafd showed only marginal concern for the domestic problems of Egypt, after 1936 and the Treaty with Great Britain, one might expect that the Wafd would turn its attention to internal reform. However, foreign affairs, including still the issue of "complete independence", the "unity of the Nile Valley" and the growing conflicts in Europe (including German and Italian incursions into Africa) continued to predominate in party politics. In its involvement with domestic politics the Wafd became too hard-pressed by the Palace, opposition parties, and its own factions to find time for substantial constructive programs. Indeed, the Wafd's neglect of internal affairs, beyond the achievement of independence, constituted one of the Wafd's greatest failings in the eyes of many observers and participants in this period of history. For one, Mirrit Butros Ghali, in his critical and reformist work, Siyāsat al-Ghad ("The Policy of Tomorrow") finds fault with the Wafd on exactly this point:

The Wafd distinguished itself from other political associations through its strong spirit and its will to a definite end, namely the unconditional liberation of Egypt from all foreign powers. The aim was a whole, real program in itself. As Egypt became an independent state and the period of foreign concessions was over, that end was consummated and the party's program was completed.

The Wafd should have then immediately veered its attention towards the interior and set up economic reconstruction as a basis for its program and governmental policy. Unfortunately, however, the Wafd had no ready-made plans, no known internal policy for the new regime of complete independence, although it had had plenty of time and opportunity for drawing up such political, economic and social national reconstruction programs. After its goal was reached, the party seemed to have no more work to do, and its raison d'être was lost.¹

In a terminology of politics, the Wafd could certainly not be called an ideological party with a Weltanschauung, nor a party of "total integration" for social reconstruction (like the Baath, PPS, or Communist parties). Rather it was a pragmatic and bargaining party, compromising and evolutionary in outlook. In its declarations it championed majority rule (being itself usually in the majority, even if out of office) and expounded liberalism in political theory. However, its economic policy entailed little democracy of public welfare, and with the rise of Axis powers in Europe, democratic ideals became somewhat discredited.² A.H. Hourani notes

¹ Mirrit Butros Ghali, The Policy of Tomorrow (Sivasat al-Ghad), trans. Isma'il al-Faruqi, American Council of Learned Societies, Washington, 1953, p.6

The first edition of this work, published in 1938, had opposed land reform as an unfair innovation; not until 1945 did Ghali change his position, by writing another work on Agrarian Reform (al-islāh az-zira'i).

² Dr. Hafiz 'Afifi gave some recommendations for economic reforms in his work, 'Ala Hamish as-Siyāsah, Dar

this movement:

The alliance between 'liberalism' and nationalism broke down in the later days of the Wafd, and Egyptian nationalism tended either to attract to itself a different content or to have none at all.³

Before determining the extent of the Wafd's influence or interaction with the social structure, we should examine the social classes represented in the Wafd. At the time of its founding the Wafd was known to represent a fairly wide segment of the population, yet with the professional classes laborers, small government officials and large landowners in the lead.⁴ In particular, Prince Yūsuf Kamāl of the Muhammad Ali dynasty, and Sheikh Muhammad Badrāwi 'Ashūr, owning estates in Gharbiya province amounting

al-Kutub al-Misriyyah, Cairo, 1938. Included were recommendations for a general and graduated income tax, gentler collection of taxes, with less expense or fewer evasions (p. 153). On agriculture Dr. 'Afifi cited statistics showing that nearly 4 million Egyptians, peasants owing less than one feddan and agricultural day workers, earned only LE. 1 a month, or three piasters a day (p. 165). He advocated the use of improved seed and techniques and tools, research, and the founding of a land credit bank (pp. 168-179). For labor he offered no specific proposals, other than execution of existing laws (p. 195-197).

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A.H. Hourani in the Preface to J.M. Ahmad's The Intellectual Origins of Egyptian Nationalism, Oxford, London, 1960, p.xi

4

Jacob Landau, Parties and Parliaments in Egypt Praeger, New York, 1954, p. 149.

to 18,000 feddans or second in extent only to the holdings of the royal family, gave lavish contributions to Wafd coffers.⁵ Then there were the Coptic gentry: the families of Khayyāṭ and Ḥannā (with their scions, George Khayyāṭ Bey and Sinut Ḥannā Bey in the original 17 Wafdists), and Wīṣā family holding vast territories in Minya and Asyūt (Upper Egypt).⁶ At a later time in the 1920's and 1930's other great landowning families gravitated to the Wafd: 'Allouba, Mahmūd (by Hāmīd Mahmūd), and the clans represented by Faṭhallaḥ Barakāt, Wāṣif Butros Ghāli, and Aḥmad Maḡlūm.⁷ In 1936 the notorious Fu'ad Sarag ud-Din (later to be a Secretary-General of the Wafd) joined the party ranks, having at his disposal 3300 feddans in Gharbiyah

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Ahmad Shafiq, Hawliyyat Misr as-Siyasiyyah, Matba' Shafiq Pasha, 1926, vol. 1, p. 326. Lacouture asserts that al-Badrawi had 20,000 serfs on his estates in Mansuriya-Egypt in Transition, Criterion, New York, 1958, p. 91.

6

The role of large landowners in politics and society is discussed thoroughly in Gabriel Baer's A History of Landownership in Modern Egypt 1800 - 1900, Oxford, for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1962, pp. 138-146 on the relationship to politics. The Copts are mentioned on p. 137.

7

Ibid. p. 145.

province.⁸ In 1937 the following large landowners joined the Wafd and achieved considerable influence in party politics: Muhammad Sulaiman al-Wakīl, Muhammad al-Maghazi 'Abd Rabbuh, Bishrā Ḥannā, Muhammad al-Hifni at-Ṭarazi, Ahmad Mustafa 'Amr, and Fahmi Wīṣā; a few years later came Ahmad 'Abboud and Sabri Abu 'Alam.⁹ Naḥḥas himself had definite landed interests through his wife, Zeinab al-Wakīl, daughter of 'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Wakīl with his holdings in Sumukhrāt, Buhaira province.¹⁰ In May 1936, shortly after becoming Prime Minister, Naḥḥas pressured the Shari'a Court in Ṭanṭa to appoint himself nāẓir (guardian and beneficiary) of three awqāf mushtaraka (12,000 feddans) in Samanud, Gharbiya province.¹¹ When he was dismissed as Prime Minister, these waqf lands reverted to the Ministry of Waqfs. Furthermore, in the Senate, where all through the 1930's and 1940's

⁸
Ibid. p. 145.

⁹
Ibid. p. 145.

¹⁰
Ibid. p. 51; p. 144.

¹¹
The story of Naḥḥas' involvement with waqf land was divulged during Parliamentary debates of 12 and 24 May 1943, between Naḥḥas and Makram 'Ubaid. See Baer, op. cit., p. 184.

the Wafd was predominant, large landowners were represented by virtue of the Constitutional provision that Senators should as a prerequisite for nomination or election pay a land tax of LE. 150, meaning, at the prevalent rate, that they should own at least 150 feddans. Of course, not only the Wafd but other parties also had a large representation of big landowners, especially the Liberal Constitutionalists. Ali Maher, for example, had ties with the Fūda family of landlords, while the Sa'dists of 1937 had such gentry as Muhammad ash-Sha'arawi, Ahmad Hilmi Mahmūd, and members of the al-Atrabi family.¹²

On another side the Wafd drew in industrialists, like Ahmad Ḥamzah, rich owner of an ice factory, executives of the Egyptian Sugar Refineries, cotton merchants, capitalists in the monopoly bloc, "Federation of Egyptian Industries" and the Miṣr chain of enterprises and banks, and financiers. On the next line were the upper bourgeoisie and the professional classes, lawyers, doctors, engineers, magistrates, intelligentsia. The lawyers carried especial weight, and were represented on most Wafd committees, including the Command Council of the Blue Shirts.¹³ Amongst the more prominent lawyers were 'Abd al-Fattāh aṭ-Ṭawīl

¹²

Ibid. p. 145.

¹³

See Chapter 3, pp. 59-60

(President of the Lawyers' Syndicate in Alexandria), Muhammad Abd al-Hadi al-Gindi (Vice President of the Court of Appeal), Abd al-Hamid Abd al-Haqq (President of the Lawyers' Association in Cairo), and Ali Zaki al-'Arabi Pasha (law professor at the University of Cairo).

On another level were the Wafdists of the middle class or lower bourgeoisie. These Rashid al-Barawy (writing in 1952) commends for their "populism":

(they were) mostly of the new bourgeoisie who had not been affected by vested interests, whether national or foreign, and were therefore marked by a spirit of nationalist progressive and even revolutionist character. Such a section was naturally closely connected with the popular basis upon which the Wafd had founded its structure.¹⁴

No doubt also that the Wafd always maintained "grass-roots" support among the peasantry, although perhaps indirectly through people in authority over them more than on a mass-participation basis. The omdahs themselves in the twentieth century had become medium landowners, having usually 10-50 feddans, and with other village elders ('ayyān) could exert enough influence to control the political expression of the fallahin.¹⁵ However it was done, there can be little doubt

¹⁴ Rashid al-Barawy, The Military Coup in Egypt, Renaissance, Cairo, 1952, p. 168.

¹⁵ Henry Habib-Ayrout, S.J., has written a perceptive study of the Egyptian peasants, The Fellahin (trans. Hilary Wayment), Schindler, Cairo, 1945. The original was entitled Moeurs et Coutumes des Fellah, Payot, Paris, 1938. For reference to local government see pp. 44-50; on the 'apolitical' nature of the fellahin, even if registered Wafdists, see pp. 141-142.

of the Wafd's hold on the country people, which John Badeau has described in clear terms:

The Wafd was the only party that took pains to develop and maintain a village organization: other parties centered their efforts in Cairo with no ward organization in the countryside. In any unfettered election the village vote-always the largest- would inevitably go to the Wafd, since that party alone took the trouble to cultivate the political loyalty of the fellah.¹⁶

The heterogeneous and diffuse composition of the Wafd meant that it could not achieve enough "interest aggregation" to articulate the interests of a single class or pressure group. Yet one faction or element of the party could block implementation of a program or measure benefitting another faction. For example, although the Wafd always declared itself for the welfare of the workers and farmers, it was not able to legislate laws or take executive action in their favor, on account of the preponderant influence of the large landowners and industrialists in the party leadership. On the matter of land reform, for example, the Wafd "agrarian program" of 1935 completely ignored the major question of inequitable land distribution, while a former Wafdist author, like Dr. Hafiz 'Afifi (one of the original 17), could publish a book on the economic and social problems of the country without even mentioning

¹⁶

John Badeau, "The Emergence of Modern Egypt" in Foreign Policy Association Bulletin, March-April, 1953, pp. 42-43.

do not seem to have gained a voice in the Wafd or found any other political expression. Then, even more so, the 85% of the peasants who owned no land remained completely outside of the political system, ignored by all parties.²⁰ Furthermore, unions of agricultural workers were illegal throughout the 1930's and 1940's; taxation, mostly indirect and not even based on income until 1939, bore down severely on the peasantry, already living on a subsistence level.²¹ Besides the peasantry, other social elements could also be judged outside of the political system: Bedouins (badu) 256,000; Nubians 39,000; Sudanese 28,000; the Syrians-Palestinians 31,000; and partly the Jews, 64,000, of whom 22,000 had Egyptian nationality.²² The European foreign communities, mostly resident in Alexandria, kept busy with commerce, banking, and their closed-in societies, not

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Badeau, op. cit., p. 35.

²¹

Henry Ayrout, op. cit., Charles Issawi notes the inequitable taxation and the prohibition of unions for agricultural workers, Egypt at Mid-Century, Oxford, New York, 1958, pp. 233-236.

²²

L'Egypte Indépendante, Centre d'Etudes de Politique Etrangère, Paris, 1938, pp. 83-84.

venturing into the political life.²³

The laboring class took little part in politics, nor was cared for much by Wafdist or other legislation. In its early history, however, the Wafd had organized unions and used them in its political campaigns. 'Abd ar-Rahman Fahmi, for example, had formed some unions in 1919, illegal but implicitly recognized by the authorities. For one thing, the proletariat was small, 478,000 in 1937, growing to 709,000 in 1947, or only 10% of the population.²⁴ In the early 1930's some trade unions had begun to function, but thereafter went underground after harsh repression of attempted strikes. Although there were in general no conspicuous or able labor leaders, one person, 'Abbas Halim, started some agitation with his small (10,000 members) Egyptian Labor Party.²⁵ The Wafd tried to capture the

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For some notes on the European community in Egypt, especially in Alexandria, see Georges Ketman, "The Egyptian Intelligentsia" in The Middle East in Transition, op. cit., pp. 478-486. Some of the Europeans, however, were influential in beginning the Communist Party, which from 1930-1935 opposed the Wafd, but from 1935 to 1945, supported it in accord with directives to form national fronts,

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Charles Issawi, op. cit., p. 58.

²⁵

Marcel Colombe, L'Evolution de l'Egypte 1924-1950, Maisonneuve, Paris, 1951, p. 207.

movement by naming 'Abbas Halim as President of a Wafdist Labor Council, but later failed in its coordination with him.

Although some gestures were made on labor's behalf the record of the Wafd reads poorly. Law No. 64 of 1936 established the principle of workmen's compensation for industrial accidents; in the same year a "Bureau of Intellectual Unemployment" was set up.²⁶ Beyond this, little was done. Compulsory insurance for work accidents did not begin until Law No. 86 of 1942, and until that date trade unions were still not legally recognized. State and municipal employees, and agricultural workers were excluded from unions; no National Federation was permitted, and the police could attend and supervise meetings. Indeed, the Wafd itself had dissolved the newly-formed Federation of National Trade Unions in 1936, because of its interference with government employees.²⁷ No minimum wage was ever fixed.

On another side of the social scene, the sheer youthfulness of the Egyptian population was bound to have

26

Ibid. p. 210. For original documents refer to Journal Officiel, No. 102 du 17 Septembre 1936. Also Aziz el-Maraghi, La Legislation du Travail en Egypte, Paris, 1937.

27

M.T. Audsley, "Labour and Social Affairs in Egypt" in St. Antony's Papers No. 4, op. cit., p. 95.

political repercussion: 50% under 20 years, 75% under 30.²⁸ Although about one-half of the children of school age were not in schools, the other half counted much in terms of influence. In 1939 the total number of students in primary, secondary, and higher schools reached 232,000; and in 1941 there were about 20,000 in 36 Government secondary schools, 14,600 in 71 private schools (mostly religious or foreign-directed) and 8,000 University students.²⁹ Some considerable unemployment gave more impetus for youths to engage in violent political agitation, there being 7500 unemployed Baccalaureate holders and 3500 University or higher school graduates in 1937.³⁰

The population pressures menacing Egypt could be seen in the late 1930's. Between 1937 and 1947 the population increased 19.4% annually, certainly an explosive figure for a stagnant economy.³¹ During the same time span

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Issawi, op. cit., p. 58.

²⁹

S.N. Fisher, The Middle East: A History, Knopf, New York, 1959, p. 459. "Egyptian Gazette", December 17, 1958.

³⁰

Issawi, op. cit., p. 261.

³¹

Badeau, op. cit., p. 32 The Census of 1937 calculated Egypt's population at 15,904, 525, of whom 1,307,420 lived in Cairo, and 682,101 in Alexandria. "Times" April 17, 1937.

certain professions increased their numbers immensely and did have some connection with membership and policies of the Wafd: the skilled professions doubled, journalists and writers increased sevenfold, personal services (especially feminine employment, bringing a feminist movement simultaneously) tenfold.³² In general the inter-war period marked an advance for the bourgeoisie and those in the liberal professions - those who constituted the "second line" of the Wafdists, after the top class of landowners and industrialists. In an important interest aggregation the self-employed middle class (about half a million in numbers), composed mostly of merchants, clerks, professionals, and businessmen (in that relative order) came to align itself not with the lower classes, as has happened often in European history, but with the upper classes - the political elite of industrialists, politicians, landowners, and their retinue.³³ Of course, the wealthy classes mingled their interests, so that landowners would often drift into commerce, banking, insurance, there forming "interlocking directorates".³⁴

³² Issawi, op. cit., p. 62.

³³ Morroe Berger, loc cit., pp. 64-65. Issawi observes that "Although its intellectual dispositions and influence are distinct from those of the landlords, the higher professional class, especially the lawyers, tends to merge socially and politically with the landlord class. Many of its members

For its part, the bourgeoisie never kept to urban business, but often retained property, family, and homes in the countryside. So, with the collusion of the middle and upper classes, the Wafd, along with the other political parties, effectively made a common front against the underprivileged, and never competed with one another to offer welfare measures to the masses.³⁵ In the period from 1936-1939 some of these social conflicts arose, but were repressed, and would reemerge only too soon again.

spring from that class and retain their connection with the land. Others who originate in the petty bourgeoisie hasten to mark their advent to affluence by the purchase of an estate". (op. cit., p. 150)

³⁴
Baer, Landownership in Modern Egypt, op. cit., p. 142.

³⁵
Nadav Safran, Egypt in Search of a Political Community, Harvard, Cambridge, 1962, p. 194.

CHAPTER V

THE WAFD IN OPPOSITION 1939 - 1941

As World War II approached and soon engulfed Europe and then other parts of the world, Egypt became more and more affected by external events, the tenuous border between domestic and foreign affairs receding more than ever. The power structures of the society took note of the rising or falling fortunes of the Allied and Axis forces, adopting a neutral position when the armies were deadlocked, and then favoring whichever side gained the advantage. Yet on the domestic scene, the Wafd kept its steadfast opposition to Muhammad Mahmud's regime, which governed outside of the dissolved Parliament from December 1937 to April 1938, then ruled in two consecutive ministries from April 1938 through August 1939, relying on Liberal Constitutional ministers, Independents, and in the fourth ministry (June 1938-August 1939) with five Sa'dists.¹ In July 1939 Nahhas had intensified the campaign against Mahmud, accusing him of subservience to England, menacing democratic freedoms, and committing irregularities in

¹ Marcel Colombe, L'évolution de l'Égypte 1924-1950, Maisonneuve, Paris, 1951. Appendice III, pp. 340-341.

government dealings with the Bank of Commerce.²

The Wafd's position was not strong vis-à-vis the other political elements. King Faruq, though only 19 years old in 1939, had a strong palace government, led by Ali Maher as Chief of the Royal Cabinet, Isma'il Taimur as Grand Chamberlain, and closely advised by Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī, Rector of al-Azhar. The British were backing Muhammad Mahmud and his coalition, victorious in the 1938 elections and by now entrenched in the Chamber of Deputies. Only in the Senate did the Wafd keep its foothold, having in the description of a French historian of the war period, "une majorité intelligente, active et dynamique" as directed by the wily Yusuf al-Gindi.³ During the spring of 1939 the Wafd was concentrating its fire on the British, protesting against involvement in the War. But in the summer they abandoned this campaign, perhaps in response to weightier British presence: in July the appointment of General Wavell as Commander-in-Chief of Middle Eastern forces, and reinforcement of the 10,000 man British soldiery with the arrival in August of Indian

² "al-Ahram" July 21, 1939.

³ Jean Lugol, L'Egypte et la deuxième guerre mondiale, Schindler, Cairo, 1945. (Also in English translation), p. 20.

contingents.⁴

The internal situation took a sudden turn in August 1939 when Mahmud, for genuine reasons of health (he was to die two years later) resigned. The astute Ali Maher, who had been gathering his forces in the administrative and police units, seized the opportunity to become Prime Minister himself. Naḥḥas and the Wafd vigorously opposed this appointment, bringing to power the éminence grise who had engineered the Wafd's demise in the 1938 elections and who had ever since worked his will from the Palace, suppressing the Wafd at every chance. The Wafd gained unexpected allies when the Liberal Constitutionalists, unable to reach an agreement on their share of ministries, passed into the opposition. As opportunistic as ever, the Sa'dists hastened to contribute ministers: Mahmud Nuqrashi, Mahmud Ghalib, Saba Habashi, and Hamid Mahmud (the four who had just held ministries under Muhammad Mahmud) plus Ibrahim Abd al-Hadi.⁵ From the beginning Ali Maher incurred British disfavor by dismissing as an Under-Secretary Sir Amin 'Uthman, pro-Wafdist architect of the 1936 Treaty. Moreover, Maher was

⁴ George Kirk, The Middle East in the War (RIIA Survey of International Affairs, 1939-1946), Oxford, London, 1952, p. 33.

⁵ Colombe, loc. cit.

known by British authorities to be receiving Axis funds from the Dresdner Bank and actively promoting the Axis cause.⁶

As declarations of war were exchanged in Europe, Egypt observed the provisions of the 1936 Treaty (especially Article VII) and came to the aid of her ally, severing diplomatic relations with Germany.⁷ On September 2, 1939 by decree-law (qanūn bi-marsūm) martial law (état de siège; al-ahkam al-'urfiyah) was proclaimed, entailing measures such as censorship, control of communications and transport, limits of assembly, that could be also used against the Wafd. As required by Article 46 of the Egyptian Constitution, Parliament alone had the right to declare war. However, most parties, including some elements of the Wafd, hesitated to take such a drastic step, thinking that they could fulfil treaty obligations without it; for

⁶ Kirk, RIIA Survey, op. cit., p. 34.

⁷ In view of Ali Maher's well-known Germanophilia, it is difficult to see how, as Sidney Fisher writes, "Ali Maher... induced the government to sever diplomatic and economic relations with Germany as soon as Britain declared war". (The Middle East: A History, Knopf, New York, 1959, p. 481) Rather, Maher was induced by Parliament, the English, and the opposition to make this move. Maher's position is clarified on Fisher's next page, p. 482.

the time being, economic dispositions, internment of German Nazis and sequestration of their assets, and full cooperation with the British Eighth Army contented England. The Wafdist newspapers, "al-Misri" and "al-Wafd al-Misri" lent full support to the Allied cause from that September on, even sometime arguing for a declaration of war. Contrarily the Sa'dist publication, "al-Balagh", edited by Abdul Qadir Hamza and reputedly representing the Palace on this point, opposed the declaration, holding in particular that vital shipping would suffer grave consequences from the move.⁸

On October 11, the Chamber of Deputies took up discussion on the proclamation of martial law and the emergency laws thereby entailed. Liberal Constitutionalists, Sa'dists (led by their Secretary, Mamduh Riyad), the Nationalists (al-hizb al-watani), and the National Unionists (ittihad watani) supported it; only the Wafd, led by Abdul Hamid Abd al-Haqq, ventured to criticize it. He lamented that too wideranging powers were conferred on the Prime Minister, unrestrained even by his Cabinet, and that the press was muzzled even more than in England.⁹ The score

⁸ Lugol, op. cit., pp. 39-40. "al-Misri" September 18, 1939, "al-Balagh" September 11, 1939.

⁹ "al-Ahram" October 12, 1939.

of Wafdist deputies were joined by several others to register a mere 30 votes against the majority. On November 16 and 17 the Senate took up the legislation, with lengthy argumentation ensuing. The Wafd had 68 seats of the 143; but nevertheless, on the final vote the bill was carried 68-59, with the Sa'dists (16) and the Liberal Constitution-
alists winning over many of the Independents. One Wafdist Senator, Louis Fanus, who had voted for the bill, was thereupon expelled from the Party. In the new Parliament, inaugurated in November, the Sa'dists succeeded in having Ahmad Maher, their leader, elected Speaker.

The Ali Maher government, trying to forestall the oncoming inflation and speculation, set up a price-fixing commission, an agency much contravened by the merchants and ineffective against the already flourishing black market. In another sector of the economy, the cotton crop was endangered by the loss of European markets; the State, by buying the entire cotton crop, made prices soar in December, and caused cotton to boom as "white gold" for a brief period, but still not reaching a solution to the question of markets. The Wafd could criticize Maher for the economic dislocations caused by the War, while the relation between the Palace and the British steadily worsened as Faruq chafed under the authority of Ambassador

Sir Miles Lampson.¹⁰ Naḥḥas took advantage of this shifting attitude of Britain's to reaffirm the Wafd's and the nation's solidarity with England in the world crisis. Speaking at the grand annual dinner for the alumni of Victoria College of Alexandria, Naḥḥas gave the following peroration:

Never have our solidarity and friendship been more necessary and never have we better understood the virtues of the alliance which in 1936 has joined ... the destinies of our two peoples... We are with the powers of democracy...

It is at this moment above all that the Anglo-Egyptian friendship should be manifested in current events (sur le terrain des réalités)... For the preservation of this friendship, let us, Egyptians and English, bring without hidden motives (arrière-pensée) the best of our efforts and hearts.¹¹

Dr. Ahmad Maher, speaking for the Sa'dists, likewise pronounced words of solidarity on this occasion.

In the spring of 1940 the economic situation worsened, giving the Wafd more issues to champion against the government. To stem capital flight the Ministry of Finance prohibited export not only of capital but also money, bank notes and movable goods. Shortages of cereals and basic commodities caused public unrest, especially in Alexandria and Cairo,

¹⁰

George Kirk, A Short History of the Middle East, Praeger, New York, 1961, p. 195.

¹¹

Lugol, op. cit., pp. 66-67 (author's translation),

where food was not reaching the citizens in sufficient quantity due to the tie-ups in transport caused by the war.

On April 1 the Wafd took a major move in protest against a worsening internal situation. The Egyptian Wafd and the Parliamentary Group, meeting in the Sa'dist Club, decided by a unanimous vote of the 212 members to present a list of "demands" (maṭālib) to the British Government via the Ambassador in Cairo.¹² Recalling a speech given at Continental Hotel on February 7 by Naḥḥas, the declaration reaffirmed the solidarity of the Egyptian people with its ally and repeated its readiness to fulfill the terms of the Treaty. Then the Wafd enumerated its demands:

¹²

The full text of this Memorandum is translated in the Appendix to this chapter. A comment by an RIIA book (Royal Institute of International Affairs, Great Britain and Egypt 1914-1951, Oxford, London, 1936;1952, p. 61) is manifestly wrong when it writes:

"This attempt to put a price on Egypt's assistance during the war apparently called forth a sharp reply from the British Foreign Secretary. But no direct report of the contents of the memorandum or of the British answer to it appeared in the Egyptian press".

Indeed, the British reaction is unknown, but at least one newspaper, "al-Muqaṭṭam", printed the full text of the Wafd's memorandum. Possibly when the RIIA study was done, complete back-issues of the Egyptian papers were not available. Also, perhaps the historians rely too often on translations from the press, rather than it directly (e.g. Kirk, who knew little Arabic but relied on RIIA files and Oriente Moderno, like numerous other historians of the period).

1. Evacuation of British armed forces from Egypt when the War is ended. The Wafd complained of the expenses involved in building barracks for the troops, supplying them with equipment and provisions, supposedly thereby depriving Egyptians of necessities.
2. Egyptian participation in the peace negotiations at the end of the war, in order to "defend its interests and work for the realization of its aims".
3. Recognition of Egypt's "full rights" in the Sudan "in the interests of all the Sons of the Nile".
4. Abolition of martial law. Noting that martial law was not declared in England or even in its colonies, the Wafd argued that "still it is feasible to protect military affairs by the promulgation of ordinary laws". They lamented the extension of censorship to non-military matters.
5. Cotton transactions. The Wafd protested the fall in Egyptian cotton prices, and the loss not only of Axis but also neutral markets. The Wafd expected Britain to buy up the unsold cotton at pre-War prices.
6. Relief for the banking crisis. The Wafd assailed certain English commercial and banking transactions and accused England of trying to establish an Egyptian State Bank under English management.

From the British side there is no indication that these demands had any effect other than perhaps being "noted" or "taken into account". However, the demands would increase the Wafd's popularity at a time when its political fortunes were low.

In the summer of 1940 came another change of government, due to British dissatisfaction with Ali Maher

as Prime Minister, not only uncooperative but even pro-Fascist.¹³ Specifically he refused to declare war against Italy after she had done so against the Allies. Moving ahead of Maher, the Egyptian Parliament first sent a resolution to Italy saying that Egypt would abide by her Treaty commitments, but would not declare war unless invaded or bombed; then relations were broken on June 12.¹⁴

Hassan Sabri, an Independent and former Minister of Defense and Ambassador to London, became the new Prime Minister after Maher's resignation on June 23 (whereupon the entire Italian diplomatic staff left the country). Sabri was able to form a cabinet representing all parties but the Wafd, and was thought well of by British commentary—"the new Cabinet is a vast improvement on its predecessor, in which the relations between President and members were by no means of such a close personal nature".¹⁵ The Wafd

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For a keen characterization of Maher's policy, refer to Lugol, op. cit., p. 98. In the RIIA Survey, Kirk writes of Maher's extreme nationalism, "seeking complete independence with the approval of King Faruq and of the greater part of the politically conscious stratum of the population" (p. 40), an appeal stealing much of the Wafd's thunder, as well as its greatest slogan, "complete independence".

¹⁴

Kirk, RIIA Survey, op. cit., p. 38.

¹⁵

"Great Britain and the Near East" (weekly periodical, London) August 8, 1940.

refused to participate in it, wanting the new cabinet to be non-political and to administer the country without a Parliament until new elections could be held. Also the Wafd refused to collaborate with the Sa'dists in Sabri's cabinet. Sabri's Ministry, also, could not come to grips with the internal situation, and, according to Heyworth-Dunne, "could not formulate policy".¹⁶ Soon the Sa'dists reversed their position on Egyptian neutrality and tried to outdo the Wafd in courting Britain; they pressed Sabri for a declaration of war but met rebuffs from the others of the coalition and then dramatically resigned from the cabinet on September 21, 1940. The episode of Sabri's government ended in November when the Prime Minister, reading the Speech from the Throne in Parliament, died suddenly of a heart attack.

Another Independent came forward, Hussein Sirri Pasha, who tried to form a coalition government.¹⁷ Though

16

J. Heyworth-Dunne, Religious and Political Trends in Modern Egypt, n.p., Washington, 1950, p. 38.

17

A lively sketch of Sirri Pasha is given by an Egyptian professor Magd-ed-Din in an article "Party Politics in Egypt, March 1945" included in R.L. Choudhury's compendium, Egypt in 1945, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1946: "Hussain Sirri Pasha is an able engineer, but nothing of a politician. His wife is the aunt of Queen Farida; at the same time he is friendly to the English, He was Prime Minister for a few months after the beginning of the war. He is dragged (in) whenever they want an easy man to carry a certain program".

Cf. Lugol, op. cit., p. 166. Note also Nassif's caricature of the Egyptian politician, pp. 54-56.

opposed both by Wafdist and Sa'dists, he was able to win over the Liberal Constitutionalists and so formed an unstable cabinet, shuffled frequently after its composition. In December 1940 on a vote of confidence Sirri won by 122-68 votes. For the sake of foreign policy the Wafd voted for it, but not the Sa'dists. The Wafd's spokesman, Abdul Hamid Abd al- Haqq, wondered how the Sa'dists could refuse to support this ministry, having already participated in all other ministries since 1936 and collaborated in economic, military and foreign policy which the Sirri government pledged to uphold.¹⁸ It was the first time in its history that the Wafd supported a non-Wafdist government. The Sa'dists in Parliament, led by Mahmud an-Nuqrashi and Ahmad Maher, used considerable influence to block the work of the Sirri ministry. Soon the Wafd also began to attack the government's domestic policy .

In December the Wafd readied itself for a propaganda assault by founding a new daily, "ad-Diya" with Maḥmūd at-Ṭumi'a as Editor-in-Chief, Tawfīq al-Yāzigi as editor and Aḥmad Qāsim Gawdet (owner of "al-Wafd al-Misri") as a chief writer.¹⁹ During 1941 the Wafd was able to

¹⁸ "al-Ahram" December 29, 1940.

¹⁹ Oriente Moderno, vol. 20, December 1940.

harass the government in the Chamber and the Senate.

Heyworth-Dunne reports on it as follows:

The Sirri Ministry was very inefficient and during the latter part of 1941 had no control whatsoever over the situation. Sirri had no political following, with the result that the Wafdist members of the Chamber of Deputies prevented him from making up his mind about so many of the problems in hand, especially the food question.²⁰

In the Senate, as of April 1941, the Wafd kept its majority and could at least delay legislation passed in the lower house. The Party strength was as follows: Wafd 64; Independents 47; Sa'dists 16; Liberal Constitutionalists 16; People's Union 3; Nationalists 2; plus 5 Ministers as Senators.²¹ The Senate Wafdist leaders were Mahmud Basyuni (President), Yusuf al-Gindi, and Hussein Muhammad al-Gindi.

To begin the year 1941, the Wafd directed a memorandum to King Faruq, elaborating on their assessment of the foreign and domestic situation.²² They said that

²⁰ Heyworth-Dunne, op. cit., p. 38.

²¹ "al-Ahram" April 4, 1941.

²² "al-Ahram" January 3, 1941. Also Oriente Moderno, vol. 21, 1941, pp. 58-61 (in Italian). British opinion took open offense at this memorandum, the "Times" diplomatic correspondent writing (on January 9, 1941):

"... the victories of Sidi Barram and Bardia have not prevented Mustafa Nahhas and the other leaders of the Wafdist Party from giving further proofs of their irresponsibility..."

The memorandum comes ill from the Wafdist chiefs, who have stoutly refused to assume or to share any responsibility for the Government of Egypt since the outbreak of war with Egypt".

Although the Egyptian press printed the memorandum, it was not allowed by the censors to comment on it.

Egypt had "neglected nothing in fulfilling its full duty to its ally, Great Britain", enumerating all the measures undertaken by the Egyptians. As in the Memorandum to the British Ambassador, the Wafd lamented the restrictions on her liberty; then it went on to expose the casualties of the air raids, the war expenses, inflation, decline in production, exports and imports, and conditions particularly harmful to farmers and youth. The Wafd protested against British military occupation and Churchill's use of the word "protectorate" in a speech broadcast to Italy on December 23, 1940. The Wafd pleaded for national unity, to be attained after the calling of an election. The Memorandum was signed by 200 members of the Egyptian Wafd and the Wafd Parliamentary Group, with 56 additional members forwarding their signatures later. The language of the Memorandum was replete with compliments to the King, whose popularity the Wafd could not afford to challenge at this time.

The year 1941 saw increasing hardships for the country, many already mentioned in Wafdist declarations: a severe inflation; a scarcity of necessities such as foodstuffs (bread, olive oil, sugar, cereals) and clothing; unavailability of gasoline; disorganization of transportation; ill-administered rationing, while the black market and

and speculation were battenning off the hard times.²³ Occasionally, reform plans were announced, such as the Minister of Social Affairs' village development scheme - relocation, home - building, construction of roads and schools - but implementation was lacking.²⁴ In the spring Rommel's campaign in North Africa intensified and advanced, alarming and dividing Egyptian public opinion. Yet the Wafd stood firm against Nazi propoganda and did not seek to exploit the situation against Britain, more than presenting the demands. The Wafd Parliamentary Group, meeting weekly at the Sa'dist Club, limited its activities to manoeuvring against the government measures. At a meeting on April 7, they decided that, since the government had adopted an ineffective, undemocratic and unconstitutional program, they would not be bound by any of its negotiations or decisions; they walked out of Parliament.²⁵ They continued to call for immediate

²³Colombe, op. cit., p. 93.

²⁴"al-Ahram", January 28, 1941.

²⁵"al-Muqattam", April 8, 1941. In March the Palace had engineered a reshuffle of the Senate composed of 147 members, 88 elected, 59 nominated. On the balloting of March 7 to determine the vacancies, 32 Wafdists, 23 Liberal Constitutionalists and 9 Sa'dists lost their seats. On March 24 elections were postponed (official reasons alluded to international perils), 16 Senators reappointed, 13 replaced, of whom only Yusuf al-Gindi represented the Wafd. (Months later, on December 12, al-Gindi died). Thus, the Wafd's 43% plurality was reduced to 36%. Thereupon, the Wafdists absented themselves from both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate.

An account of this manoeuvre is given in Great Britain and Egypt, op. cit., p. 67.

elections.

On June 1 at another meeting in the Club, Nahhas declared:

We are ready to forget the past, but we set one sole condition: the dissolution of Parliament. The present Parliament is a menace to the peace of the nation, and is a survival of errors which we are willing to forget. With a semblance of legality and right, decisions are taken by deputies who do not represent the country. Is it possible that the Wafd, which everyone recognizes as representing the majority of the country, has only some 10 deputies out of 265? ²⁶

The Wafdist organ, "al-Misri", proposed a National Union Government with four or five Wafdist Ministers. ²⁷

The violence of war reached Egypt in June when Alexandria endured Italian bombardments, severe enough to cause a refugee movement: 64,000 from al-Buheirah Province and 25,000 from Damanhur, necessitating emergency housing, sanitation, medicine and food. For the last two years advocating anti-aircraft defense, the Wafd gained as the government lost support from an endangered populace. On a vote of confidence June 23, 1941 the Sa'dists (or rather one-half on their number) and the Wafdist voted together for the first time in their party history - both against the Government, as were also the Liberal

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"al-Misri" June 2, 1941.

²⁷

"al-Misri" June 4, 1941.

Constitutionalists.²⁸ Nevertheless, relying on Independent support, the Government managed to survive by a 123-60 vote.

This Parliamentary victory did not protect the Government from the national crisis, which in July brought 289,000 refugees from Alexandria and the western countryside (a figure calculated by the Ministry of Interior).²⁹ In protest against Government ineptitude, several prominent Wafdists withdrew from all Government-sponsored programs; for one, Abdul Fattāḥ at-Tawīl, member of the Wafd Central Committee, resigned from his duties on the relief committee in Alexandria, a city suffering 55 air bombardments in June and July.³⁰ On several occasions the Wafd proposed to have Cairo declared an "open city", a proposal quite unacceptable to British military authorities. To gain support from at least one quarter, Sirri Pasha offered five cabinet posts to the Sa'dists in August, quickly accepted by some party stalwarts: three former Ministers, Mahmud Ghalib, Dr. Hamid Mahmud, and Ibrahim Abd al-Hadi; and two newcomers, Muhammad Rāghib

²⁸ "al-Ahram" June 24, 1941.

²⁹ "al-Balagh" July 18, 1941.

³⁰ "al-Balagh" July 7, 1941; "al-Misri" September 2, 1941.

'Atiyyah Bey and Muhammad Hamid Gawdat.

No doubt that the Wafd capitalized on the various crises, especially on defense. National defense was then limited to civil and passive efforts (al-wiqāyah), although the Army was said to have expanded considerably: from 11,000 in 1936 to 32,000 in 1940 plus 8,000 reserves.³¹ In 1936 the military academy had been opened to all classes of the population, so that a new generation of officers was just coming into service (including certain colonels later to guide the destiny of the nation).³² A great lapse in security was revealed during the case of 'Aziz al-Miṣri, named Chief of Staff in August 1940. In the summer of 1941 he had flown out of Egypt, eastward in an apparent defection; moreover, a leakage of defense plans for the Western provinces and the Siwa oasis was traced to him. In October 1941 his trial was held, bringing much bad publicity to Sirri's Government. Later in December 1941, when the British turned back Rommel at Tobruk, the foolishness of collaboration with Germany was shown, and the Wafd, siding with the Allies, proved the

³¹ "Great Britain and the Near East" June 27, 1940.

³² William R. Polk, "Social Modernization: The New Men" in The United States and the Middle East (ed. Georgiana Stevens) Columbia-America Assembly, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1964, p. 46.

wisdom of its foreign policy. In the same month an old foe of the Wafd, Muhammad Mahmud, President of the Liberal Constitutionalists, died, being replaced by Abdul Aziz Fahmy Bey in the party leadership. Also in December a wheat and bread crisis in the cities stirred up great popular distress, advantageous to the Wafd which afforded an alternative to the drift and chaos.

CHAPTER VI

THE WAFD IN GOVERNMENT, 1942 - 1944

The beginning of the year 1942 brought still more trouble to Egyptian society: shortages of bread and flour in the cities, conflict with cotton merchants, suspension of relations with Vichy France, the resignation of the Finance Minister, the advance of the Afrika Korps into Cyrenaica, and the Axis blockade of essential imports into Egypt. A particularly sharp controversy raged over the cultivation of cereals and cotton, the strong cotton lobby opposing any reduction in cotton planting and extension of land for cereals. Sirri's Government supported measures to increase cereal production, but was opposed by Isma'il Sidqi and his lobby, the Consultative Council for Agriculture. In its official journal "al-Wafd al-Misri" the Wafd also argued for keeping up cotton as the cash crop and meeting cereal deficiencies by imports.¹ The pressure built up on Sirri Pasha until on February 2, after violent student riots (reputedly instigated by Ali Maher), he submitted his resignation.

Neither British nor Egyptian governments have published an authoritative account of the events of early February; nevertheless, an approximation may be deduced.

¹"al-Wafd al-Misri" January 17, 1942.

The British Ambassador, Sir Miles Lampson, decided that a stronger and more popular Egyptian government was necessary in view of the external threat and the constantly deteriorating domestic situation. During the past months the Wafd had intensified its campaign, calling for elections, assailing the minority parties, and warning the British against a prolonged eclipse from power.² The Ambassador called on the King and requested that Mustafa an-Nahhas be summoned to head a new government. Apparently the King, Ali Maher, and other members of the Royal Cabinet had planned for a palace government, possibly a pro-Axis one, to be installed. When Faruq and his advisors delayed or even refused the appointment of Nahhas, Lampson along with Lt. Gen. Stone and a tank force arrived at Abdin Palace with an ultimatum: either Faruq would name Nahhas or he (Faruq) would be exiled for the remainder of the war.³ The King relented and Nahhas, in these extraordinary circumstances, became Prime Minister on February 5. Before writing his letter of acceptance, Nahhas presented

² cf. U. Rizzitano, "L'atteggiamento del Wafd egiziano durante il presente conflitto" in Oriente Moderno, vol. 22, 1942, pp. 85-94.

³ The British ultimatum is described by Sidney N. Fisher, The Middle East: A History, Knopf, New York, 1959, p. 483.

a letter to the British Ambassador, declaring ironically in one paragraph:

It is quite understood that I accept this task on the basis that neither the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty nor the situation in Egypt as a sovereign and independent country permits the Ally to interfere in the internal affairs of the country and particularly in the formation and dismissal of ministries.⁴

Equally ironically, the London "Times" had written two months previously, answering Wafdist attacks on British support of unpopular regimes,

As a matter of fact it was not the British who turned the Wafd out of office in 1937, and however sympathetically they may view Wafd claims to represent the majority of Egyptians, it is not the business of the British to put the Wafd or any other party into office in this independent state.⁵

On February 6 Nahhas formed a "mono-color" cabinet of all Wafdists, slightly reshuffled in March when some of the Ministers became officers in the Chamber of Deputies. Makram 'Ubaid held the Ministry of Finance (his usual place in Wafdist cabinets) and other former Ministers of Nahhas' Government in 1936-37 returned: 'Uthmān Muḥarram, Aḥmad Ḥamdi Saif an-Naṣr, Zaki al-'Arabi, Abdul Faṭṭāh aṭ-Ṭawīl, Muḥammad Ṣabri Abu 'Alam, and Abd as-Salām Gum'ah.⁶ On

⁴ George Kirk, The Middle East During the War, (Royal Institute of International Affairs), Oxford, London, 1952, p. 210.

⁵ "Times" November 8, 1941. Italics supplied.

⁶ Marcel Colombe, L'évolution de l'Égypte 1924-1950 Maisonneuve, Paris, 1937, Appendice III, p. 345.

March 30 Gum'ah became President of the Chamber of Deputies, being replaced by Muḥammad Sarāg ad-Din (in later years to become Secretary-General of the Wafd) as Minister of Agriculture. Zaki al-'Arabi became President of the Senate, replacing Yusuf Ahmad al-Gindi, the venerable member of the Wafd Central Committee, leader of the Opposition 1938-42, and the only Wafdist Senator allowed by Faruq to keep his seat during the March 1941 purge; al-Gindi had died in December 1941. Even though a Vice President of the Chamber, Abdul Hamid Abdul Haqq retained his Ministry of Social Affairs; another Vice President, Abd al-Hadi al-Gindi, also kept his Ministry, that of Awqaf. Several of these ministers represented the capitalist and large land-owning families: Kāmil Ṣidqi (Minister of Commerce), Ahmad Ḥamza (Minister of Provisions) as industrialists, and Sarag ad-Din, Abd al-Wahid al-Wakil (Minister of Public Hygiene), Mustafa Nusrat (Minister of Passive Defense) as landed gentry. The other Ministers came from the upper bourgeoisie - especially the professional classes of doctors, lawyers, engineers.⁷ Among the lawyers were aṭ-Ṭawil (practicing in Alexandria), al-Gindi (formerly

⁷ "La Bourse Egyptienne" provided a short description of the Ministers in its issue of April 15, 1942.

Vice President of the Court of Appeals) and al-Haqq (President of the Lawyers' League).

British support quickly rallied to the Nahhas Government. On February 7 Nahhas and Lampson exchanged letters affirming the mutual loyalty of the allies and Britain's non-intervention in Egypt's domestic affairs. In the "Times" an editorial welcomed the Wafd's accession to power as still "the most powerful and vigorous Egyptian party", which had amply shown its strength in undermining coalition governments it opposed. In his authoritative history of The Middle East in the War Kirk finds wisdom in the British turn-about support of the Wafd:

From the British point of view, on the other hand, there was every justification for bringing in a government which was constitutionally based on broad popular support (as Sirri, with all his goodwill, had not been). There was a chance that the Wafd, in which the large producers and merchants were less heavily represented than in the other parties, might take a stronger line with hoarders and profiteers; and, at the worst, its superior organization throughout the country might be expected to deal with popular discontent more effectively than could a coalition of 'notables' without roots in the general public.⁸

Nahhas set to work on the domestic scene. For the sake of close Anglo-Egyptian coordination, on February 9 Nahhas named Amīn 'Uthmān (Osman), an Oxford-educated

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Kirk, RIIA Survey, op. cit., p. 211

gentleman and one close to English sources, as Minister of State; he served as intermediary between the British Embassy and Naḥḥas. It is believed that 'Uthman gave names of those dangerous to public security. Then, for the economic crisis, Naḥḥas stopped restrictions on the supply of food-stuffs. The Government, in an attempt to diminish hoarding, offered to buy wheat and corn at prices 50% above the controlled price ceiling fixed previously. On February 24 the Cabinet Secretariat announced raises in the daily pay of agricultural and day laborers - to have no less than a shilling a day. Naḥḥas set up conciliation committees to adjust wage dispute, thus avoiding strikes and lockouts harmful to the war effort and to general productivity. Resistance to Government policies arose only from some student groups - as telegrams from the "Misr Association" of Egyptian students in France and Switzerland (likely at Italian instigation) and some student strikes in Cairo and Alexandria on February 18, as a protest against Naḥḥas' speech the previous day in which he had stressed the need for full cooperation with the Allies.⁹

⁹ Oriente Moderno, vol. 22, 1942. The activities of the "Misr Association" (President: Maḥmūd Nāṣir aṭ-Ṭaiyib), which was invariably anti-Wafdist, and the student demonstrations of 1942 are reported by Italian newspapers, "Il Messagero" and "L'Osservatore Romano" rather than by Egyptian papers.

In March the Wafd began to campaign actively for the election. According to a "Times" despatch on March 2, more than 100 Wafdist Parliamentary candidates were running unopposed in their constituencies. In a speech over the radio on March 7 Naḥḥas for the first time stressed the primacy of "social reform", leaving aside the previously outstanding issue of "complete independence". In one of many political bargains, Naḥḥas met with Hassan al-Bannā, Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brethren, an extremist group just then gaining notoriety, Banna's collaboration with the Naḥḥas regime was secured, lasting until after the war. Meeting with the Opposition, Naḥḥas offered them 60 seats in the new Parliament, an allotment the "Times" correspondent deemed generous, thinking 40 closer to their electoral possibilities.¹⁰ Nonetheless, Sa'dists and Liberal Constitutionalists were not satisfied, and decided to boycott the elections; some, however, ran as independents. A "Times" editorial supported Naḥḥas and recounted the failure of the other parties. Yet just the day before, the Cairo correspondent had cast doubts on the Wafd's administrative abilities: "The Wafd is faced with serious internal problems to deal with, which it is unfortunately not so well

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"Times" March 25, 1942.

equipped with administrative talent as the other parties".¹¹

When the election results came in, a Wafdist landslide was evident: in the Chamber of Deputies the Wafd had 89% of the seats or 223 of 264, with only a handful for the others - 14 Independents, 4 Liberal Constitutionalists, 2 Sa'dists, and 2 Nationalists.¹² In the Senate, where the Wafdists had been reduced by Faruq's manipulations of August 1941. Nahhas had passed a Royal Decree rescinding the legitimacy of 21 royal appointments, replacing them with Wafdists.¹³ Then, by the elections, Wafdists captured 54% of the Senate with 81 seats, versus 37 Independents, 11 Liberal Constitutionalists, and 10 Sa'dists.¹⁴

On March 30 Nahhas delivered one of the longest Speeches from the Throne ever given to Parliament. Many of

¹¹ "Times" March 25, 1942.

¹² "Times" March 27, 1942. Oriente Moderno (vol. 22, 1942, p. 168) cites Turkish newspapers, but these underestimate the Wafdist strength at 216 seats, probably on the basis of early returns. Twenty-eight seats would be contested in later elections. Notable among the losers was Isma'il Sidqi, authoritarian former Prime Minister and wealthy industrialist.

¹³ "L'Osservatore Romano" March 11, 1942 cited in Oriente Moderno, Ibid.

¹⁴ "Times" March 27, 1942.

his proposals were implemented, while others at least specified Wafd intentions or indicated outstanding domestic problems. The major propositions are listed below in the order read:¹⁵

- Increased food production, especially of wheat, the price being fixed at LE3 per ardabb. Since the import of Chilean nitrates was blocked, the use of domestic fertilizers was to be encouraged.
- Facilitation of imports, but allowance of only those exports unable to be consumed in the home market.
- Maximum cotton production compatible with other needs, especially cereals, and in consideration of increased production costs.
- A balanced budget, without drawing on reserve funds.
- Reduced taxes, especially for farmers on the land tax (daribah al-atyan). The fellahin earning less than 50 piasters a month would be exempted from the tax; those earning more would have reductions.
- Increased public security, continuing the sequestration of Italian and German property and imprisonment of fifth columnists.
- Selling of government land (amlak amiriya) to private citizens.
- Increased trade with the Sudan and Eastern countries.
- Increased industrial production by the building of new factories; founding more chambers of commerce.
- Curbing of prices on essential commodities such as foodstuffs.

¹⁵ The complete text of the Speech from the Throne is reproduced in "al-Muqattam" March 30, 1942.

- Improving of summer resorts, especially for low and middle classes.
- Institution of Royal projects to increase agricultural and industrial production.
- New Agricultural Services: Improved techniques taught by rural advisers; silo construction; irrigation; model farms; clean butchereries; canal-building and repairing, especially at Esna; a hydroelectric project in Girga Province, providing irrigation for 40,000 feddans; extension of clean drinking water facilities.
- More fire departments for the countryside.
- Promotion of domestic tranquility and peacefulness between social classes.
- Concern for a fair press.
- Bills to improve districting, prisons, and court procedures.
- Independence of the Judiciary.
- Amendment of particular laws, as on personal status and factory conditions.
- Educational expansion and reform, avoiding strikes, completing Faruq I University of Alexandria.
- Extension of public health facilities, including village units, preventive medicine, more hospitals and child care programs.
- Welfare of the workers: a law giving legal recognition of unions; a law regulating conditions of individual employment; arbitration committees to avoid strikes; minimum wages; compulsory insurance against accidents; provision for a weekly holiday.
- Abolition of prostitution; supervision over places of entertainment and youth centers.
- Waqf reform.

- Building and renovation of mosques.
- Increased charity and welfare benefits to the poor and disabled.
- Support for al-Azhar University.
- Improved means of transportation.
- Restitution of the Ministries of Social Affairs, Provisions, and Passive Defense (wiqāya).
- Modernization and reequipping of the Army and Airforce, with expansion of civil aviation as well.
- Avoiding war and keeping good relations with all friendly countries.

In the spring of 1942 many of these proposals became law, easily and quickly passed by the Wafdist-dominated Parliament and signed by the King. Law No. 86 of 1942 provided for compulsory insurance against work accidents. Another law (No. 85) gave trade unions legal recognition for the first time. Still, however, unions could not engage in political activity; moreover, state and municipal employees as well as agricultural workers were barred from unions. Police had the right to attend union meetings. The Wafd would still not permit a National Union; it did not pass the comprehensive minimum wage bill it promised.¹⁶ In April 11 Nahhas issued a military

¹⁶
 M.T. Audsley, "Labour and Social Affairs in Egypt" in St. Antony's Papers No. 4, Middle Eastern Affairs, Chatto and Windus, London, 1958.

ordinance, in his capacity as Military-Governor, abolishing prostitution.¹⁷ On May 4 the Amnesty Bill passed the Chamber of Deputies with 212 votes in favor.¹⁸ For industry the Naḥḥas Government, working in cooperation with the Middle East Supply Centre of the Allies, began a phosphate industry for fertilizers, a factory for jute sacks necessary to the grain trade, and a cardboard and wrapping paper industry.¹⁹ Although some profiteering was inevitable, the rationing system operated effectively in Egypt (though not in the Levant).²⁰ To obtain a larger wheat crop nearly one million acres were converted from cotton to grain, as decided by the Ministry of Agriculture in May. They decided that in the northern part of Lower Egypt grain and barley should constitute 45% of the cultivation, and in the rest of the country 60%.²¹ The decree was issued in August

¹⁷ "al-Misri" as cited in Oriente Moderno, 1942.

¹⁸ "al-Muqaṭṭam" May 5, 1942.

¹⁹ Kirk, RIIA Survey, op. cit., p. 183; 185.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 187.

²¹ Ibid. p. 181. "al-Balagh" August 27, 1942.

and took effect immediately.

In the midst of the Wafd's governmental activities, a crisis arose both in the Cabinet and in the Party. In late May, Makram 'Ubaid, Minister of Finance, was reported to be at odds with Nahhas over certain governmental policies. After an attempted reconciliation, the crisis came to a head when Makram protested over Nahhas's exceptional promotion of three functionaries in the Ministry of Finance. Their appointments to high departmental positions were known to be sanctioned by the Wafd Executive, by the Cabinet, and, of course, by Nahhas personally, a relative of two of those involved.²² Perhaps also Nahhas had come to resent the vast powers of Makram, often exerted behind the scenes. The conflict was clearly on the personal level and from a conflict in rival ambitions.²³ Makram resigned as Finance Minister on May 26, while Nahhas submitted the resignation of his entire ministry and formed another, again all-Wafdist, with Kamil Sidqi replacing Makram. The following day the Wafd Central Committee convened and heard

²² "al-Misri" May 23, 1942, as cited in Oriente Moderno, vol. 22, 1942.

²³ Kirk, RIIA Survey, op. cit., p. 213.

Nahhas speak on "how the Devil had made dissension" between himself and Makram, never thinking that Makram should leave the party. The members agreed that the important thing was to keep intact the internal structure of the Wafd, even Makram agreeing to stay with it and saying that "time will prove that my friendship with Nahhas is inalterable".²⁴

Makram's departure from the Cabinet apparently did not cause an immediate stir in the country nor harm to the party for some time. The "Times" commented as follows:

Makram Pasha has always been content to be the power behind the throne and has never achieved any appreciable personal public popularity or following. Thus the change will not make any great difference, although his financial acumen and flair for political strategy, as well as his brilliant oratory, will be missed.²⁵

Nevertheless, on July 6 Makram, failing to attend a party meeting, was dismissed as Secretary-General, a post he had held for 15 years as Nahhas' confidant and right-hand man. Along with him went Rāghib Ḥanna Bey, one of the oldest Wafdists. The "Times" underestimated Makram's influence among his followers and found "no reactions and remarkably little public interest" in his

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"al-Misri", as cited in Oriente Moderno, loc. cit.

²⁵

"Times" May 27, 1942.

dismissal: "Makram is finding no support and even his dozen or so of deputies who were formerly his followers have nearly all now transferred their allegiance to Nahhas Pasha."²⁶ Backing Nahhas all the way since his installation, the British would brook no opposition to his authority. But Makram did gather his forces, so that 14 Wafdist deputies and four senators made a declaration of criticism against the Wafd and were forthwith expelled on July 13; also, it has been alleged that many Copts left the Wafd following Makram's lead.²⁷ To replace him the Wafd named Şabri Abu al-'Alam, then Minister of Justice, as Secretary-General. Soon Makram rallied his supporters and formed the "Independent Wafdist Bloc" or "Kutla". It would be able to harass and embarrass the Wafd, but not deal any vital blows until some years later.

Meanwhile, the Government was carrying on with its work. In June Abd al-Hamid Abd al-Haqq introduced a

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"Times" July 10, 1942.

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"Corriere della Sera" July 14, 1942, as cited in Oriente Moderno, loc. cit. On Coptic defection from the Wafd, see Edward Wakim. A Lonely Minority: The Modern Story of the Egyptian Copts, Morrow, New York, 1964, p. 23

Government Bill making Arabic compulsory for commercial book-keeping, accounting and all governmental correspondence. The year before in Sirri's ministry the bill had been successfully resisted by foreign (especially British) companies, and consequently was killed at the stage of committee deliberation. No doubt that one benefit of the bill was to provide work for unemployed Egyptians; but also the matter of language pride, particularly keen for speakers of Arabic, counted greatly.²⁸ Article 49 of the Constitution provided for Arabic as the official language, although Article 16 allowed the use of other languages in private life and religion. The Bill was rushed through Parliament in two days and published on August 2.

In July war conditions in Libya, the British retreat from Marsā Matrūḥ and loss of Tobruk, caused much stir in Egyptian public opinion, increased speculation but no panic. An American correspondent

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Later in his speech on "National Struggle Day", November 14, 1942, Naḥḥas admitted that the main advantage of the law was providing work for young unemployed Egyptians; yet he also stressed the increase of contacts between Egyptians and foreigners as well as the proper honor to Egyptian culture by recognizing the primacy of its language. "al-Muqaṭṭam" November 14, 1942.

noted the "presence of a strong pro-Axis bloc in the Palace itself, the pro-Axis leanings of many members of the Wafdist party, widespread political corruption in Cairo and other areas".²⁹ In the event of Axis occupation or a break in internal communications, the Wafd Government issued decentralization orders to local government officials - mudirs, ma'murs, omdahs, sheikhs and ghaffirs - delegating them exceptional powers and funds to maintain public security.³⁰ In the Parliament Makram used interpellations to protest against British interference, illegal exports, and violation of civil rights. British authorities, for their part, much appreciated the Wafd Government's firm control over the internal situation during this summer when Rommel's campaign reached its height. Nahhas' reassurances to Parliament on the adequacy of British defenses and admonishments against rumours and panic served to uphold order and encourage perseverance in trying times.³¹ In

²⁹ Edmund Stevens, "Christian Science Monitor" July 24, 1942, cited in Kirk, RIIA Survey, p.215. On Nazi influence, the "Times" noted that "among the younger educated Egyptians there was inherent admiration for the ruthlessness and efficiency of Germany". (November 26, 1942).

³⁰"Times" July 10, 1942; "Egyptian Gazette", July 8, 1942.

³¹Kirk, RIIA Survey, pp. 216-217. See also Nahhas's statement on the concord of British and Egyptian interests in the war effort, "al-Misri" August 5, 1942. RIIA Survey, p. 227.

reference to those days, the "Times" Cairo correspondent was later to speak of Naḥḥas as "a tower of strength" with "immense qualities of wisdom, courage and leadership".³²

By the fall of 1942 the external pressure on Egypt eased with allied successes such as the 'Alamein victory in October-November and the Allied landing in North Africa on November 8. Though the Parliamentary Opposition had not disturbed the Wafd Government, the latter decided to study the proper role of an Opposition and delegated Parliament's Secretary-General, Muhammad Kāmil Sālim Bey, to prepare a report on the subject.³³ He found that the Egyptian Opposition did not correspond with the Opposition in England or France, being extremely small and heterogeneous, without a single leader and without an alternative policy program. He therefore recommended that the Opposition need not be granted any more privileges than those already enjoyed. On another policy matter, the Minister of Finance declared the Government's intention of redeeming or converting the Egyptian public debt, so that it could fulfil war obligations and not be subject to the credit of other nations.

³²

"Times" November 26, 1942.

³³

"al-Balagh" September 12, 1942; as cited in Oriente Moderno, loc. cit.

On the National Struggle Day, November 31, Naḥḥas gave a speech reviewing the accomplishments of his Government during the past year, and its further concerns.³⁴ He cited the Wafd's three labor laws (minimum wages, compulsory insurance, and recognition of unions), the Arabic Usage Law, and welfare measures for students. As future legislation he expressed the Wafd's "special care for poorer classes", raising prices of agricultural products, and stabilizing rising costs of production, particularly in cotton.

On November 19 Naḥḥas delivered the Speech from the Throne, enumerating many Government plans - fewer than those listed in March at the last Speech and worded with more generality. Many of the items were repeated from the previous Speech. Pledged were the following:³⁵

- More provisions (there still being a deficiency of wheat, corn and rice).
- Continued agricultural improvements, including new irrigation of 251,000 feddans.
- More essential imports like fertilizers, and a just distribution of them.
- Increased exports of commercial crops, like sugar and rice.

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"al-Muqattam" November 14, 1942.

³⁵

"al-Muqattam" November 19, 1942 where the full text is reproduced.

- Establishment of textile factories.
- Price control over essential goods.
- Location of markets for the cotton crop, plus development of new varieties of cotton.
- Pay increases, such as doubling the cost of living bonus to Government employees; a minimum daily wage of 7 piasters for workers (instead of the 5 then current).
- Social welfare: insurance against disability and sickness; construction of cafeterias for University students; government land sold at low prices to farmers.
- Village development: public health measures, clean drinking water, more imported medicines and drugs.
- Education: technical schools; improved laws on status and pay of teachers; attention to archaeology.
- Canal improvements, dredging and deepening.
- Projects in Alexandria: clean drinking water facilities expanded; establishment of an industrial complex.
- Railway and telephone services extended; from 215 to 397 diesels.
- Civil Defense improved.
- Independence of the judiciary maintained.
- Support for awqaf and al-Azhar.
- Improving of Army.
- Neutrality of the country and avoidance of war.

For his peroration Nafhas disclosed a letter he had received from Lampson saying that Britain would "use its good offices

with a view to assuring Egypt's representation on a footing of equality at all peace negotiations which will effect her interests".³⁶ Thus, one of Nahḥas's long-standing demands, first made in the Memorandum of April 1940, then repeated in June 1942, was apparently met. Others would be subject to settlement only at the end of the war.

To conduct the new Parliament the Wafd was entrenched enough to carry out whatever policies it wished. The tally of seats for the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate stood as follows:³⁷

	<u>Chamber of Deputies</u>	<u>Senate</u>
Wafd	223	81
Sa'dists	2	11
Liberal- Constitutionalists	4	10
Unionists	---	5
National	4	2
Independents	14	37
Independent Bloc (<u>al-Kutlah al-Mustaqillah</u> of Makram 'Ubaid)	17	--

³⁶ "Times" November 20, 1942.

³⁷ "al-Ahram" November 18, 1942.

As a first move the Government announced that it would redistribute state lands, of which 80,000 feddans was deemed fertile and 300,000 arable after irrigation.³⁸ The land was to be distributed in apportionments of 5000 feddans including land grants for model farms, medical centres, schools, mosques, labs, etc., and 5 feddans per family. That gross land inequality existed and needed to be rectified was known at the time: "al-Balagh", for example, reported that 55% of the total land was held by 12,000 people, while 6 million farmers held the 45%.³⁹ Yet there was no thought of touching private property. There is no indication that even this scheme for state lands was implemented. As for appropriations, they were ample enough in the National Budget for 1943-44, set at LE 65 million, a LE 14 million increase over the past year.⁴⁰ New projects received LE 5 million. Increases in the cost of living demanded LE 4 million, due to wartime inflation. Customs taxes, as a main source of national

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"al-Ahram" November 29, 1942.

³⁹

"al-Balagh" March 20, 1943 as translated in Oriente Moderno, vol. 23, 1943.

⁴⁰

Ibid. "La Bourse Egyptienne" February 1 and 2, 1943,

revenue, were increased 75% over 1939 rates, a move indicating that the Wafd was perhaps less subservient to foreign economic interests than previous governments. As another indication of Wafdist fiscal policies, the surplus profits tax was drastically increased: from LE 750,000 to LE 2,250,000. In appropriations by ministries, Communications received the greatest amount (LE 10.5 million), followed by Defense and then Public Works.

Mme. Huda Sha'rawi, President of the Egyptian Feminist Union and wife of the original Wafdist 'Ali Sha'rawi, prodded the Wafdist Government to prepare a projet de loi on the Muslim divorce system. She estimated that in 1941 the divorces were $\frac{1}{4}$ the number of marriages contracted, and that the number of abandoned children corresponded nearly exactly with the number of divorces - 54,000.⁴¹ The bill, drafted by the Ministry of Justice, proposed that: (1) married men cannot contract a new marriage; (2) no marriage can be celebrated or registered unless authorized by the qadi of the district; (3) the qadi will authorize polygamy only if a man has adequate means to support another wife in harmony with

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"al-Misri" March 14, 1943, Ibid.

the other spouse(s); (4) the qadi will not authorize divorces until he has ascertained the causes and is unable to reconcile the couple. Nothing more was heard of the bill. In March, however, Naḥḥas accomplished a campaign promise (one reputedly demanded by Hassan al-Banna) related to feminine affairs: the abolition of houses of prostitution (maisons de tolérance) which Naḥḥas did by military decree on March 29, using his powers as Military Governor. New houses were forbidden to be opened.

In Parliament Naḥḥas encountered interpellations on several matters, such as import controls of the Middle East Supply Centre, the conduct of Allied soldiers, and the pervasive influence of British counsellors (the so-called "dual government"). Commanding his enormous majority and relieved of Axis pressures, Naḥḥas bore down hard on the miniscule opposition, and on another side openly challenged Faruq's authority. Colombe comments on Naḥḥas's parliamentary tactics:

In reality, Mustafa an-Naḥḥas, supported by Great Britain, flaunted for several months royal hostility. In the Chamber as in the Senate he welcomed with a cold indifference the interpellations presented. As he wished, he could accept or postpone discussion. Seasoned by his long experience in political manoeuvring aided by censorship, sure of finding a majority of votes, he seemed invulnerable. Nonetheless, by violent

speeches pronounced against 'enemies of the country and the Constitution', in the course of frequent trips, he tried to reduce the growing credit of his adversaries. Yet he was unable to reduce the Opposition to silence.⁴²

Antagonism between the Wafd and Faruq increased to such an extent that in May 1943 Faruq tried on several occasions to dismiss Naḥḥas, but was deterred by British pressure.⁴³

In foreign policy Naḥḥas took initiatives in the spring of 1943, beginning negotiations for a League of Arab States. As early as the Wafd Congress of November 1942 he had declared to the assembled Wafdists, "The bonds which bind us to the Arab and Eastern peoples are many beyond numbering and solid beyond disturbing".⁴⁴ Throughout the year 1943 Naḥḥas was to receive Arab delegations; however, his purpose for this may well have related more to internal politics, as a counter-part to Faruq's pan-Islamic pretension, rather than as a genuine solidarity.⁴⁵

⁴² Marcel Colombe, op. cit., .pp. 106-107. Author's translation.

⁴³ Kirk, RIIA Survey, p. 259.

⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 335.

⁴⁵ William Sands, "Middle East Background" in the United States and the Middle East, American Assembly, Columbia, New York, 1961, p. 15

Makram 'Ubaid, heretofore little successful in sapping the Wafd's strength with his schism, intensified his campaign of exposure and denunciation. On March 29, 1943 he sent as a petition to Faruq the "Black Book", a muck-raking pamphlet he had compiled on the Wafd's supposed corruption. Copies were clandestinely distributed by the thousands, in England as in Egypt. Many of the charges involved Ministers and accused them of using their offices for personal gain; other charges were levelled against Nahhas himself, and also his wife, Mme. Zeinab al-Wakil (scion of a rich land-owning family)⁴⁶ From April 4 to May 5 charges and counter-charges resounded in the Parliament, the Sa'dist opposition, small as it was, showing itself quite vociferous.⁴⁷ Makram barely escaped conviction for libel. No doubt that public opinion was adversely affected by the proceedings, no matter how convincingly the Wafd presented its defense. Even if the Wafdist corruption

⁴⁶ In an Appendix to Kirk's RIIA Survey the main charges of the "Black Book" are listed and the Wafdist lines of defense described, pp. 269-272.

In a theatrical gesture before Parliament, Nahhas displayed his wife's furs, alleged to have cost £.500 each, but whose worth he appraised at £. 16 ("Times" May 25, 1943).

⁴⁷ Makram 'Ubaid declared to the "Times" Special Correspondent (May 19, 1943): "Various off-shoots of the dispute have resulted in a critical situation in which it is impossible for the ordinary business of the Government to be carried on". - If 'Ubaid did not achieve such a condition, it was then clearly enough his aim.

was known as being widespread (if not so deep), the merciless public exposure of its misdeeds was bound to "blacken its face". An anonymous observer noted that the Wafd was not as skillful as the minority parties in covering its tracks, and moreover "had more hungry clients to satisfy than the minority governments".⁴⁸

On May 24 the Parliament held a vote of confidence resulting in a Wafdist pyrrhic victory 188-76, with the Sa'dists and Independents in opposition. About 40 Wafdist~~s~~ must also have joined the Opposition, as only 188 of the 233 Wafdist~~s~~ voted for confidence. The rifts within the Wafd and shaken public confidence would be revealed clearly in the post-war period. In relation for Makram's attack the Government forces drafted a measure to expulse him from the Chamber, passed on July 12 by a 208-17 vote, with only Makram's Kutlah voting in his favor. The following day during a stormy session, a motion to condemn Makram's conduct was found unconstitutional.

The Wafd Government underwent other vicissitudes in the spring and summer. Al-Azhar students had been demonstrating against the impending assumption of diplomatic relations with the USSR in June (Muhammad

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Kirk, RIIA Survey, p. 258.

Mahmud had recognized the USSR in 1939). A malaria epidemic, lasting for two years, began in Aswan and Qena provinces. However, the extent of the suffering was withheld from public knowledge - at least some 143,000 cases - and was not divulged until February 1944. The British "dual control" of the Egyptian government caused a cabinet reshuffle in June, when Subhi resigned as Minister of Finance, protesting against the authority of the English financial counsellor, James Baxton. The Anglophile Amin 'Uthman (Osman) Pasha replaced him. Other Anglophiles moved to other cabinet positions: the Copt Fahmy Wiṣā Bey, Oxford-educated and a member of the Wafd Central Committee, as Minister of Defense; the industrialist Muṣṭafā Nuṣrat Bey as Minister of Agriculture; Maḥmūd Suleiman Ghannām as Minister of Commerce (replacing Kamil Sidqi who became Auditor-General); and finally, the fast rise of Fu'ad Sarag ad-Din can be noted from this time, when he became Minister of Internal Affairs.

In other ways the Wafd Government held its own, carrying out more legislation, making post-war plans, and benefitting from certain internal and external situations. Among its new laws were certain significant labor bills dated in the 1944 Parliamentary session. One law No. 41- passed in May, was for regulation of individual working

agreements.⁴⁹ This Individual Labor Contract Law, judged by an American labor official as "one of the best pieces of Egyptian labor legislation", provided for : seven days paid vacation a year for daily paid workers, 15 days for monthly paid; an indemnity on discharge; and notice before dismissal.⁵⁰ Wartime conditions, however, were generally hard on the workers who managed only to pick up some crumbs of benefits necessary to ensure war production. Industrial workers, numbering only some 300,000 in about 100,000 establishments, were too scattered, disorganized, and poorly-led to challenge the Wafd or press for any demands. The legislation enacted cannot be regarded as a response to labor interest-articulation.

Meanwhile, the Wafdist Government continued to give Britain full wartime support. Nahhas helped to recruit labor for work at British bases, and used the police and army to track down spies, saboteurs, and fifth-columnists.⁵¹ The British forces employed some 80,000

⁴⁹ M.T. Audsley, "Labour and Social Affairs in Egypt" op. cit.

⁵⁰ William Handley, "The Labor Movement in Egypt" in Middle East Journal, July, 1949.

⁵¹ George Lenczowski describes Nahhas' anti-subversion campaign in The Middle East in World Affairs, Cornell, Ithaca, 1962, p. 488.

skilled and semi-skilled workers, whose loss of jobs at the war's end would cause acute social pressure.⁵²

The war industry in the cities created slums that would produce a lumpenproletariat to find political expression in lawless behaviour and in extremist associations (Muslim Brethren, Socialist Party of Ahmad Husain). Such conditions would ultimately work against the Wafd.

In July the Wafdist Government continued with its legislative program. On July 24 a law was passed on the independence of the judiciary, protecting judges against dismissal for political reasons and safeguarding their rights and status, particularly as regards promotion and retirement.⁵³ Not the Ministry of Justice but a Higher Judicial Council would make appointments, promotions, and transferals of judges. By the Montreux Convention

⁵² William Polk, "Social Modernization: The New Men" in The United States and the Middle East, American Assembly, Columbia, New York, 1961. p. 43.

The Middle East Command discharged some 400,000 workers at the end of the war (Audsley). As for the effect of Allied soldiers on the Egyptian economy, they were thought to have spent L. 100/a year in Egypt ("Times" October 26, 1943). million

⁵³ "Times" July 27, 1943.

Egypt had accepted the obligation to raise the standard of its courts up to the level of the "mixed courts" by 1949 when the latter would be abolished. The legislation may be viewed as suited to this purpose, and was commended in a "Times" editorial after its passage. A "Law Against Illiteracy" - No. 110 - was promulgated on August 17 and required all employers having more than 30 workers to teach them reading and writing.

In the fall the Government took up other important business. Amin 'Uthman as Minister of Finance undertook a project to convert the public debt, the Unified and Preference Debts which amounted to LE. 85 million. To end foreign control over these debt payments due England and European countries, the Wafd Government officially closed the Caisse de la Dette Publique. By internal loans bearing a low interest and redeemable in Cairo, the debt would gradually be paid off. This payment by internal loan was thought to have two benefits: absorption of surplus money, with a subsequent fall in the soaring cost of living; and the creation of a purely Egyptian financial market.⁵⁴ One week later the loans to be repaid were specified, four ones outstanding amounting to LE. 11,587,000:

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"Times" September 15, 1943.

(1) The Public Debt of 1885; (2) The 1891 Ottoman Debt; (3) The Cotton Loan of 1941; and (4) The Cotton Loan of 1942.⁵⁵

In November a Five-Year Plan was also announced by Amin 'Uthman. Its highlight was the Aswan Dam hydro-electric project, the plans of which had been under consideration since 1935. Having been helped by British wartime aviation at Almaza airport and by the construction of Payne Airforce Base by American army engineers, Cairo was to be made "the most important air centre in the Middle East".⁵⁶ All forms of foreign capital would be welcomed in Egypt as preparation for industrialization. The Wafd, therefore, had numerous programs to remind the people of during its 25th Anniversary celebrated on November 15 by a three-day congress. The "Times" correspondent estimated that the Wafd had about three-quarters of the country on its side.⁵⁷ During the Congress Nahhas paid tribute to the British war

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"Times" September 24, 1943.

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"Times" November 18, 1943.

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"Times" November 15, 1943.

efforts and reminded listeners that the Treaty of 1936 allowed for modification after 10 years, by which time the new conditions resulting from the war would need settlement.⁵⁸

New crises severely challenging the Wafd developed in 1944. In January al-Azhar students agitated for four days, necessitating a suspension of classes and the appointment of a new Vice-Rector. The Wafd had never been able to win over this venerable institution, still presided over by Sheikh Mustafa al-Maraghi, Faruq's confidant. The malaria epidemic in Upper Egypt burst into the news, amid Opposition claims that tens of thousands were dying. Government hospitals in Cairo came in for attack, being accused of irregularities in treatment of patients and dispensing of medicine.⁵⁹ Unable to answer criticism against his public health policies, Naḥḥas instead tried to shift the blame - he denounced land monopoly as a reason for poverty and malaria in Aswan and

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Kirk, RIIA Survey, pp 256-57

59

Arthur Alport, a British doctor and Professor of Medicine at Cairo University, resigned in protest against corruption in hospital administration and wrote another "Black Book" - One Hour of Justice: The Black Book of Egyptian Hospitals, Crisp, London, 1947.

Qena Provinces.⁶⁰ Others blamed the Allied troops, whose food demands might have caused shortages aggravating the epidemic; yet a British statement of February 19 pointed out that no purchases of cereals or meat were made without the consent of the Egyptian Government.⁶¹ In fact, the poverty of Upper Egypt and the prevalence of diseases of all kinds was no new situation at all - only the malaria had intensified the misery; the disease-carrying mosquito was perhaps introduced into the area by airplanes flying to Egypt from East Africa.⁶²

The Government had formed a Post-War Planning Committee which was charged with making preparations for industrialization, relieving unemployment, increasing electricity and power, improving transport facilities, including a reorganization of Nile River traffic system.⁶³

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"al-Ahram" February 29, 1944.

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"Times" February 21, 1944.

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On the conditions of the peasants in Upper Egypt, see Winifred Blackman, The Fellahin of Upper Egypt, Harrap, London, 1927, passim, but especially Chapter XII "The Village Medicine Man".

63

"Great Britain and the Near East" (weekly) April, 8 1944, p. 11.

With its Five-Year Plan and such portfolios in hand, the Government made a record budget for 1944 - LE. 70 million. Its financial situation had strengthened because of income from the 1942-43 cotton crop, calculated at $4\frac{1}{2}$ million qintars or over half the amount of the previous crop. Production had reached record levels in quality and yield.⁶⁴ The 1943-44 crop, small but of finer varieties, needed a 20% increase of the official purchasing price, a Wafdist move no doubt in response to the powerful cotton merchants' lobby.

In the spring of 1944 Nahhas and King Faruq completed fiercely for popularity, both making tours of the countryside. As Military-Governor Nahhas used censorship to counteract bad publicity, and imprisonment for anti-Wafdist agitators; Makram himself was imprisoned on May 9, after being charged with conducting seditious meetings. Once again British authorities restrained Faruq from disinvesting Nahhas as Prime Minister. The Opposition in Parliament took over the Wafd's traditional militancy for "complete independence"

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These statistics are quoted from Ali Shamsi Pasha, Governor of the National Bank of Egypt (Bank Misr) during a speech before the 44th general meeting of the Bank, March 29, 1944, as reported in "Great Britain and the Near East", April 29, 1944, p. 37.

and protested against Churchill's use of the verb "protect" with reference to Egypt.⁶⁵ Naḥḥas argued that the word was used in the general sense and did not imply the continuation of a Protectorate. Naḥḥas also faced criticism on the behaviour of the Allied troops, prey to the notorious Egyptian underground, so that "the latent anti-foreign sentiments of the Egyptians began to manifest themselves again, especially in the middle and lower ranks of the official class".⁶⁶ This xenophobia, which would be taken up by extremist groups after the war, could no longer be exploited by the Wafd, as in the days of Zaghlūl.

Matters between the Wafd and Palace worsened, touched off by an incident in September. When posters were put up showing Naḥḥas and Faruq side by side, the Director-General of Public Security, Muhammad Ghazzālī Bey, pulled them down, perhaps at Faruq's direction. Naḥḥas dismissed the man immediately and appointed another, one obedient to his own wishes.

In September and October Naḥḥas had been receiving and presiding over various Arab delegations, in preparation

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"Times" May 1, 1944.

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RIIA, Great Britain and Egypt, 1914-1951, RIIA, London, 1952, p. 77.

for founding the Arab League. Even a Pan-Arab Congress was held in Alexandria, lasting for a few days in early October and serving on the Egyptian scene to pull Nahḥas away from the usual political manoeuvring vis-à-vis King and opposition. Then, amidst this international distraction, in supposed anticipation of Nahḥas' resignation and appeal to the country (unlikely in view of these international commitments), Faruq suddenly dismissed Nahḥas on October 8. By now at the ebb of the war in the Middle Eastern front, the British had no more immediate interests to continue supporting Nahḥas against his internal foes. So, after so many failures in getting the dismissal, Faruq at last succeeded. The letter of dismissal expressed rather ironically the Sovereign's desires to see the country "governed by a democratic Ministry, working for the fatherland, and enforcing the laws of the Constitution in the spirit as well as in the letter, giving equality to all Egyptians in rights and duties, and bringing the masses food and clothing..."⁶⁷ Such, indeed, were the manifest Wafd intentions! In one written protest against the fairness of the dismissal, Gibb wrote in 1951 that Nahḥas was

⁶⁷ "Times" October 9, 1944.

"ignominiously dismissed" in 1945,⁶⁸ Faruq's action could be considered reprehensible in that he struck when Naḥḥas was off his guard; as for the Wafd as the rightful ruling authority, its electoral mandate had been clear by its overwhelming majority; finally, the Wafd, by managing the country's affairs steadfastly and energetically during the protracted war crisis, should have deserved a period of peaceful rule and recuperation.

At this juncture the Sa'dists realised their greatest opportunity heretofore, and began their rapid rise as the dominant political faction, while the Wafd commenced its disintegration and weakened impact on national affairs. The Sa'dist President Ahmad Maher formed the coalition government, aided by four other Sa'dists as Ministers (Nuqrashi, Ḥafiz Ramaḍān, Mahmud Ghālib, and Ibrahim Abd al-Hādī) and by Makram 'Ubaid, released from prison to retake his old portfolio of Finance, who brought along three cohorts from his Independent Bloc (Kutlah Mustaqillah) to become Ministers. In an effort to culminate his exposure of Wafd corruption, Makram went on to lead a government commission of enquiry

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H.A.R. Gibb, "Anglo-Egyptian Relations: A Reevaluation" in International Affairs, October 1951, p. 442 (The page reference given in Kirk's RIIA study, footnote 4, p. 263 is p. 449 of Gibb's article - incorrect).

into the Wafd administration, and was assisted in this muck-raking by the Public Prosecutor and the Assistant Royal Counsellor.⁶⁹ Faruq, for his part, was able to reinstate Ghazzali as Director-General of Public Security, a post now turned around against the Wafd, which had been using it to enforce the "Defense of the Realm" measures of repression. Political prisoners were ostentatiously released, as the new regime was drawing up new lists of those "disturbing public order", as the Constitutional phrase ran.

The Wafd put up surprisingly weak resistance. After sending a petition to the King asking for a non-party government to organize the elections, and getting the negative response that could have been expected, Nahhas decided to boycott the elections. Furthermore, the Wafd resolved to dismiss any Wafdist who ran for office.⁷⁰ By mid-December 809 candidates stood for 264 seats, of whom the Ministers, as well as 14 Sa'dists, were unopposed.⁷¹

⁶⁹ "Times" October 31, 1944.

⁷⁰ "Times" December 1, 1944.

⁷¹ "Times" December 15, 1944.

The elections, held on January 8, gave the following results for the Chamber of Deputies:⁷²

Sa'dists	125 seats
Liberal Constitutionalists	74
Independents	34
Independent Bloc	29
National Party	$\frac{7}{269}$

It is astounding that the Sa'dists achieved these results so rapidly, even in the case of Wafdist boycott; perhaps it indicates the opportunism not only inherent in the Sa'dists but also endemic to the general political scene.

Independents and Nationalists formed the small opposition, maybe "inspired by the Wafdists", as one Egyptian writer believed.⁷³ The Wafd did retain, however, its stronghold in the Senate (holding 64/140 seats), at least until late spring; by Constitutional provisions, the Senate could not be dissolved - purge and replacement, as well as the Royal appointments, were the means of capture. Only former Senate President and sometime Minister, Zaki al-'Arabi was replaced. Slowly, as the

⁷² Magd ed-Din Nassif, "Party Politics in Egypt, March 1945" in M.L.R. Choudhury, Egypt in 1945, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1945, p. 31.

⁷³ Ibid.

terms of office of Wafdist senators expired, they too were replaced; seventeen royal appointments followed, so that the Senate likewise became part of the Egyptian "rump" Parliament. The Wafd, habitually accused of being "stronger out of office than in", now would be hard put to make even this claim good.

This narrative of the Wafd Party reaches an end in 1945. Events thereafter seem to confirm trends and characteristics already discerned in the historical analysis over the years from 1936. Not the Wafd but its offspring (or perhaps its abortion), the Sa'dists hereafter commanded the political scene. Yet their command was even more precarious than that of the Wafd. Lenczowski aptly summarizes their predicament:

"The anti-Wafd, Sa'dist-dominated cabinets that governed Egypt from 1944 to 1949 faced a most difficult situation. Opposed by both the Wafd and the extremist groups, they had little appeal for the masses. At the same time they had to curb repeated outbreaks of violence, strikes, and antigovernment or antiforeign demonstrations, and calm down public excitement over the Palestinian issue. The war left a sad heritage of inflation and unbalanced agricultural production, deepened the gap between the fixed-income groups and the profiteers (predominantly Levantines, who made fortunes on contracts with the Allied forces), and caused fantastic fluctuations in the cotton market and - after the withdrawal of foreign armies - large-scale unemployment among workers. Thus, although Egypt did not suffer serious war devastation and even emerged as a creditor with

large sterling balances, her financial status - always socially inadequate - was seriously disturbed".⁷⁴

The Wafd's manoeuvrability in the countryside, its usual preserve when out of office, also diminished.⁷⁵ Indeed, its entire political expression soon became submerged in myriad acts of lawlessness by other political elements which characterised the period from 1945 to 1950.⁷⁶ In 1950 the Wafd might be considered to have made its last stand. In the elections of January it gained 228 out of 319 seats, and Nahhas, by then 71 years old, became Prime Minister.⁷⁷ With a flourish the Wafd Government passed two significant laws: one abolishing secondary school fees (an initiative of Taha Husain as Minister of Education); one establishing a "non-contributory" social security - for widows, orphans, disabled and aged; some 18 regional and 327 local offices were supposed to have been established.⁷⁸

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George Lenczowski, op. cit., p. 490.

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J.W. Heyworth-Dunne, Religious and Political Trends in Modern Egypt, p. 44.

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Marcel Colombe, L'évolution de l'Egypte, op. cit., p. 225 et seq.-chap. VIII and by the same author, "Qu'en est le wafd égyptien?" in L'Afrique et L'Asie, No. 10, 1950.

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Lenczowski, op. cit., p. 491.

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M.T. Audsley, loc. cit.

Such measures, too little and too late, compare with Nahhas' last gesture in December 1944: he established two orphanages, one in Qena, one in Aswan provinces. In the Wafd's record on the domestic scene of Egypt, such accomplishments would carry their weight. But would the good work committed balance the good work omitted?

F i n i s

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER I
THE WAFD CONSTITUTION OF 1919

(translated by the author from the text in Ahmad Shafiq's Tamhid, Hawliyyat Misr as-Siyasiyyah, vol. 1, Matba' Shafiq Pasha, Cairo, 1926, pp. 153-156).

1. The Egyptian Wafd is composed of the following men: Sa'd Zaghlul Pasha; Ali Shaarawi Pasha; Abdul Aziz Fahmy Bey; Muhammad Ali Bey; Abdul Latif Makabatti Bey; Muhammad Mahmud Pasha; Ahmad Luṭfi as-Saiyid Bey; Isma'il Sidqi Pasha; Sinwat Hanna Bey; Hamad al-Bāsil Pasha; George Khayyat Bey; Mahmud Abu Nasr Bey; Mustafa an-Naḥḥas Bey, and Dr. Hafiz 'Afifi Bey.
2. The purpose of the Wafd: seeking by sound and constructive methods to find a way towards the complete independence of Egypt.
3. The Egyptian Wafd derives its powers from the desires of the Egyptian people, as expressed directly and through its representatives in the legislative bodies.
4. The Wafd lasts as long as the work delegated to it takes to perform, and declares its own dissolution.
5. The Wafd is not authorized to change the task which was delegated to it. Neither the Wafd nor

any member of it will depart from the demands and the limits which its authority depends on, namely, the complete independence of Egypt and whatever this entails.

6. Each member of the Wafd shares in the performance of the mission (muhimmah) in the manner delegated to him and with faithfulness to the work, not revealing the secrets of the Wafd.
7. If the expulsion of a member of the Wafd is called for, the decision shall be by at least a two-thirds majority. The member who resigns from the party at any time does not have the right to return until a time elapses equal to what he has already spent in the Wafd.
8. The Wafd may take in other members after their approval by an election and following their participation in the work.
9. The Wafd will travel to any place on a journey it deems beneficial to the Egyptian cause, and it may delegate some members to travel on similarly beneficial journeys.
10. Decisions will be taken by a majority vote, and if the votes are equal, then the side which the President is on shall win.

11. The Wafd will appoint (yu'ayyin) a President, Secretary, and Treasurer. It is proper that every one of these (officers) shall have assistants named from among the members.
12. The Wafd may appoint any member it sees fit to for any position, and it may appoint committees to define the number of its members and their qualifications.
13. The President represents (yushakhkis) the Wafd, presides over its meetings, keeps its order, and supervises its work, its committees, and members holding positions, and the work of the treasury and secretariat.
14. The Secretary handles the written work of the Wafd; documents, minutes, books, and other Wafdist papers, other than book-keeping accounts, are entrusted to him.
15. The Treasurer keeps the money collected in security for general Wafdist expenditures or in a bank designated by the Wafd. He supervises the book-keeping work and is responsible for every monetary transaction of the Wafd.
16. The Wafd is considered to be in continual session. Organizational meetings are convoked by the President, who in cases of necessity is authorized

- to take quick decisions; in such cases he should put the matter before the next organizational meeting for insertion into the record.
17. Speakers at the sessions are jointly responsible, together with the minutes of the meeting, for all the motions and decisions. It is also necessary to prepare memoranda on all speeches relating to the mission of the Wafd.
 18. Minutes are approved at the following meeting, as verified by the signature of the President and Secretary.
 19. In addition to the speakers the Secretary will keep a record in which he will make daily entries concerning events, changes, and work, showing this daily record to the President.
 20. No member of the Wafd is allowed to speak in the name of the Wafd to the general public, unless he informs the President of the subject of his speech, puts his speech in writing after its delivery and presents the text to the President. If he is not able to notify the President before the speech, the speaker must declare that he does not represent the Wafd in his speech.
 21. Every member will pay from his own private account

for travel and residence, being entitled to request funds only for affairs related to the mission of the Wafd; he will spend none of the Wafd's money except for its benefit.

22. No member will make transactions with Wafdist funds except by decision of the Wafd and by permission of the President and Treasurer. The Wafd will decide the amount of a loan to be transacted for urgent business, on condition that the Wafd verifies the transaction after the expenditure of the loan and requests a report on the matter.
23. The Wafd may form an association of free workers to help in administrative and clerical jobs, being under the supervision of the Secretary or the Treasurer, and ultimately the President, depending on the nature of the work. The employees will take an oath not to reveal any secret that they may become aware of on account of their work.
24. The funds of the Wafd will be collected out of contributions paid by members or others who wish to assist the work of the Wafd.
25. What remains after expenses of the Wafd have been paid will be used for general affairs of Egypt, as the Wafd shall decide.

26. The Wafd will appoint a committee called the "Egyptian Wafd Central Committee", its members being chosen either from incumbents or others. Its mission is to take all measures for the security (dhimmah) of the Wafd, informing the Wafd of these measures and other special matters of its mission.

MEMORANDUM OF THE WAFD TO THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR

Translation of the Text as Presented in
"al-Muqaṭṭam" April 2, 1940

INTRODUCTION

Your Excellency,

The Egyptian Wafd and the Parliamentary Wafdist Group met on the 31st of March and the first of April 1940 in the Sa'dist Club and decided unanimously the following decisions which are announced by our spokesman (bi-wāsiṭah), the Honourable President of the Egyptian Wafd, to Your Excellency and thereby to the British Government.

We feel the need to introduce these decisions with a word indicating the spirit we hope for. Considering the danger of the hour which the world, as well as the Egyptian Nation and the Anglo-Egyptian Alliance, is going through, it is our duty to fulfill the hopes of the country to carry on with the matter, prepare for it, and to explain with the fullest meaning and frankness to our ally, the British Government, in the remaining time the rights which are lacking and are not even striven for.

Our President and the leader of the Nation was entirely clear and frank in the speech which he delivered in the reception at the Continental Hotel on the evening of February 7. There he expressed the solidarity of the Egyptian people with its ally in its hard times, and with democracy during its crisis, when preserving honour for the name of Egypt. We intend an unfaltering friendship, whereby Egypt undertakes its full duty, desiring to fulfill and respond to this duty whatever the dangers. This speech was but one of many expressions of the cordiality and generosity which the Egyptian people have shown since the conclusion of the treaty of friendship and alliance between Great Britain and Egypt. Afterwards it was determined by a constitutional change that the Egyptian people and its government would manage the affairs of the country with the blessings of its ally and its unstinting aid: the desire of the two allied governments in their words and in their spirit. In spite of the desire for all of this, the international situation became disturbed and with the

highest vows the War began. The President of the Wafd announced that Egypt would support the Allied people, and that duty required every Egyptian to help (yu'addad) the ally and to increase its strength. Therefore, the Government will confine every hostile person aiming to stab its ally in the back.

Such is the position from the Egyptian side of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty and its implementation. The declared mode and trust of this alliance was expressed and presented by Egypt to her ally, carrying the necessity of confronting every danger to the victory of the British people in this war: this is the first objective and the first interest. Such is still the position of the Egyptian people in regard to its ally, as the President defined it in his speech and as the people define it in their conduct.

Then it has become necessary for us, having this attitude, to demand Britain to define her position with regard to us. She should provide for our destiny, in accord with the Treaty and its implementation, a destiny we have formed and which Egypt deserves. A small nation, it does not and has not relieved its ally from the concern over the war and its burdens, which scarcely involve its associate, Egypt. Yes, it has become our right to ask our ally to guarantee for us what we guarantee for her, with respect to friendship, sincerity, and concern for our welfare and rights.

--In the light of all these considerations and in regard to the current danger which has approached this country, although not yet neared our gates,

--For fear of the arrival of the Anglo-Egyptian alliance to a dangerous spiritual crisis, which has unfortunately shown its first signs among individuals of the Egyptian people, and has even extended to other Arab and Eastern peoples,

--Consequently, the Egyptian Wafd and the Parliamentary Group, after an examination of the situation from all sides, takes the following decisions aiming to achieve rights of the country and good relations between the two allied countries.

I. The British Armed Forces in Egypt

In the name of the Egyptian people, the Egyptian Wafd and the Parliamentary Group demand that our

ally, the British Government, declare henceforth that, once the present war's burdens are taken away and a peace treaty concluded among the belligerent nations, she will withdraw all British forces - and likewise all militarized forces either before or after the war - from Egyptian soil. She will evacuate all fortified places in Egypt. Nevertheless, the Treaty and its provisions remain in force between the two contracting parties.

This rightful demand for the necessity of evacuating British troops from all Egyptian territory is a logical and necessary conclusion, in view of the present circumstances. It has now become difficult to carry out the text of the Treaty in regards to the military barracks. This difficulty has not arisen from any short-coming on the Egyptian side but on the contrary has arisen from her concern for her ally's interest, and her (Egypt's) compulsion to spend millions from the Treasury, whether saved or not, for immense military preparations which Egypt has undertaken as help for its ally. Expenses for constructing barracks for British troops have added to the difficulty of food provisions, as well as difficulty in procuring matériel necessary for the war.

Furthermore, on the second aspect of the matter, we are continuing to spend excessively on the evil of armaments for the Egyptian Army, and to make arrangements for conferences of British soldiers, improving the equipment of the Egyptian Army, giving it provisions and increasing its numbers. All this has its effect, and no doubt in the present situation should be coming to the end of the period specified in Article VIII of the Treaty - to construct lodgings for the British forces in time of peace - these forces not to exceed 10,000 men, as the text stipulates.

Finally, for the third consideration, the cooperation of the Egyptian and British armies in their military operations under these conditions entails dangerous discriminations prejudicial to the cooperation of the two nations in the implementation of the alliance and the realization of its aims. So we do not agree with Her to the remaining of British military forces, either de jure or de facto in any part of Egyptian territory. There will be no need for them after the Egyptian Army completes its outfitting, and especially after the victory, with God's

help, of the Allied forces. And let Him forbid every threat to extend the war further! In addition, a representative of this force (the British Commander-in-Chief) remains in Egypt, indicating a lack of confidence between the allies, even after the Treaty has proven a success, although adversities arose between them and the time of war tried their loyalty.

II. Egyptian Participation in the Peace Negotiations

When God willing, the end of the war is reached, Egypt must be a party to and actually participate in the peace negotiations to defend its interests and to work for the realization of its aims, be they spiritual or material.

III. Egypt and the Sudan

After the peace negotiations are concluded, either Egypt or England must enter into a discussion to recognize Egypt's full rights in the Sudan, in the interests of all the Sons of the Nile.

IV. The Abolition of Martial Law

Concerning the martial law now declared in Egypt according to the request of our ally -as it appeared in the official declaration of H.E. the Prime Minister presently in office - we ask our ally to put a complete end to it and to notify the Egyptian Government of this annulment. It is clear that the continuation of this military rule gives an occasion for the present government to abolish it, as being against the will of the people. There is no benefit in repeated promises to limit it to requirements of military affairs, or a promise of one thing and the doing of something else, as experience has proven on past occasions.

There was no need for our ally to declare martial law in Egypt while it was not even declared in its own country nor in its colonies, despite involvement in a war which Egypt is still far from. Complete understanding continues to exist between Her and the Egyptian people, and still it is feasible to protect military affairs by the promulgation of ordinary laws.

This does not mean permission to enforce the Treaty in accord with provisions of military rule without any modification, as if the Treaty were solely for Egypt in the present time. Nor does the Treaty mean the censorship of military news to extend over all Egyptian affairs until Egyptians reach the age of independence, as though they are blind and deaf instruments, whose voices not heard in the conduct of their country's affairs. Nor do they know to what destiny they are being driven, though they cannot doubt who is driving them!

Undoubtedly, if the British Government does not declare an annulment of the martial law, no Egyptian government could be formed to continue it; or the matter would develop into a situation in which the Egyptian Government and the Egyptian people by their own initiative would settle the affair.

Internal developments have rapidly led to a complete breakdown in general and particular supplies, and the popular revolution has fallen down to its nadir. Aside from the military expenditures, the immense war demands have abetted this situation, as we have seen from the embargo on exporting cotton and operations against the export of other crops. This has led to a reduction of Egyptian cotton prices to what often registers at 20 riyals, while cotton is sold in foreign markets, such as Switzerland and others, at 35 riyals per qintar. Other cottons inferior to Egyptian in grade and quality are sold for not less than 30 riyals.

What calls for regret is that difficulties are imposed on Egypt in exporting a sufficient quantity of cotton to neutral countries, to whom it is forbidden to export cotton - even if we do not export - the amount exported in the past year. Thus, much Egyptian cotton has remained in the port for a long time without being allowed to be exported under any conditions by order of the British Admiralty. As a result of all of this, the cotton market in Egypt has come to a standstill, a large quantity of cotton not finding any market in foreign countries. Then there is another important and dangerous event: many foreign neutral countries have enriched themselves at the expense of Egyptian cotton, as by buying American cotton.

The imports to neutral countries of American cotton in the period from September to November 1939 have

doubled what they were in the previous two years. For example, the imports of American cotton to Sweden in that period increased fourfold from what they were in 1938; in Norway they increased twofold, in Belgium nearly doubling, in Holland more than threefold, in Yugoslavia nearly 50%, in Hungary twenty times more, and in Switzerland 160 times more!

The "Manchester Guardian" says that some of this cotton finds its way into Germany, while facilitating its accumulation in neutral countries. It is evident from these statistics collected in our marketing survey that our ally is not working along with us in the matter of our principal crop, nor in supporting our revolution, unlike Turkey and other countries. She will not buy from us or let others buy!

What increases the seriousness of the matter is that the British Government has expressed to the Egyptian Government its readiness to buy about 1½ million qintars of cotton at prices, so it said, much higher than the level before the war. In a speech on another occasion She said 'the price levels as of 15 November' - varying between 12-28 riyals for the 'Ashimouni' variety and 13-29 riyals for the 'Gizah 7' and 14-41 riyals for the 'Sclaridi'. At that time the speeches made something of a determination. But the Minister of Finance sent to the Financial Committee of the Senate a speech dated March 11, 1940 in which She said: 'The British Government expects that having the cotton sold at these prices will end in a short time the possibility of agreeing on the price quota system!'

This explicit and open statement means that our ally is not satisfied in buying only a small amount of our cotton at debased prices, but ruins us by deprivation and scarcity. If Egypt does not accept the price quota system which She has refused a short time ago, then it is evident that Britain will keep us waiting for payment and will shackle our national economy with iron chains!

VI. The Quota System and the Central Bank

In consideration of all of this, the Wafd and the Wafdist Parliamentary Group seek to call the attention of the British ally to the danger of this situation and other measures which attempt to set a single

quota system, or negotiating with an Egyptian government which does not represent the Egyptian people. Also, England aims to set up an English bank as an Egyptian Central Bank, occupying its administration for two years and then staying on for 50 years; She has other dangerous projects giving her every gain and Egypt every loss. This will lead to a popular revolution in the country and its economic independence, once its budget goes bankrupt, and the government dignitaries and even the rich citizenry run out of money. The country will suffer a financial crisis verging on a disaster, which will remain and not abate!

These are the Egyptian democratic demands from its democratic ally, presented to strengthen the bonds of alliance and not to weaken them. These demands accord with the essence of the Treaty, which was concluded on the basis of cooperation between the democratic countries at war, and to promote trust and respect between the two peoples.

There is no doubt that the Treaty was not concluded and inaugurated unless it would promote freedom and true democracy. Then it was the duty of the ally to understand the truth of the Egyptian Nation's position. Moreover, all that touches the interest of Egypt has its effect on the Arab and Eastern nations, which join us in patriotic faith, solidarity, and brotherhood. They will not refuse to side with Democracy as long as their independence is respected, and their rights and demands, spiritual as well as material, are recognized. We give our aid to Democracy liberally and freely, by choice and without compulsion, and to our fullest capacity.

Your Excellency, please accept our highest esteem.

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The author has had the opportunity of studying under many scholars of modern Egyptian history, including

preeminently: Prof. Hans Kohn (summer 1957); Prof. George Kirk (spring 1958); Prof. H.A.R. Gibb (two semesters 1959); Dr. William Polk and Dr. Nadav Safran (as senior tutors in 1960-61); and Prof. Mahmud Zaiyid (1963-64) who has directed this thesis and provided many little-known details on the Wafd Party. Without the knowledge and inspiration of these teachers, and numerous others, this thesis would not have been possible. From Harvard University: Veritas; from American University of Beirut: Vita.