

# IN THE COLONIES

## The Egyptian Bourgeoisie in Power.

By J. B. (Jerusalem).

When one thinks of the enthusiasm with which the population greeted the first "People's Ministry" of the Wafd under Zaglul Pasha in the year 1924 and the many illusions which even broad strata of the population entertained regarding the power of the Wafd party, then the cool reception accorded the present Cabinet of Mustafa Pasha Nehas, pompously described as the second "People's Ministry", is particularly striking. The Egyptian bourgeoisie, both during the Zaglul Ministry and during the following coalition-opposition period, did everything in order to destroy the illusion regarding its revolutionary role.

While the Zaglul Ministry of the year 1924 was still to a certain extent swept into office on the wave (already ebbing) of the revolutionary movement, the present Nehas Ministry is the fruit of a prolonged bargaining with the British resident. If Mohammed Mahmud was a creature of the Conservatives, of the Churchill-Lord Lloyd wing, Nehas Pasha is a creature of Henderson and of the new British representative in Egypt, Sir Percy Loraine.

That the Wafd is able to support itself formally on "Parliament" and the "Constitution" is solely due to its splendid apparatus. This apparatus, however, is entirely in the service of the bourgeoisie. If one reads the programme of the victorious Wafd, one finds there repeated almost word for word the same promises which Mohammed Mahmud formerly made — without however keeping them. There is the same demagogic allusion to the needs of the "peasants", whom the government must hasten to help. No mention, however, is made of the fact that those chiefly responsible for the present situation of the peasants are no other than the same pashas who occupy posts in the Wafd Ministry and who live privately from the sweat of the fellahin toiling on their estates.

Regarding the workers the programme states:

"The Government will give attention to labour laws and also try to meet the demands of hygiene."

On the other hand, a great deal is said regarding the creation of favourable conditions for trade and industry, regarding reform of the stock exchange and, above all, increasing the state revenue.

The bourgeois Wafd party goes even further. If it does not yet openly approve the British Draft Treaty, it nevertheless says that this treaty must form the basis for the Anglo-Egyptian agreement. What is particularly remarkable is the circumstance that the whole press, before all the British, loudly expresses its satisfaction with the "moderate" programme of the Wafd. No, the second "People's Ministry" of the Wafd, in spite of the fact that it includes a few leaders who pose as being radical, is anything but a "dangerous" Ministry. It will not only faithfully serve the Egyptian bourgeoisie but also English imperialism.

But the negotiations with England will put the Wafd to a very severe test; in order to be able to justify the complete betrayal of its original independence programme, the Wafd must endeavour to achieve some, even if only formal, improvements in the original draft. This will involve the raising of some points which are very delicate for England, such as the Sudan question. If the Wafd capitulates however in this sham manoeuvre, it will undoubtedly create disappointment with its methods both among the masses of the Egyptian fellahin and the working classes of the towns. Already an attempt (it is true a very modest and cautious one) is being made to found a fellahin and another labour party. The Wafd realises that itself, and certain followers of the Wafd wish to get this movement into their own hands.

The new Wafd Ministry therefore, in no ways serves to bridge over the Anglo-Egyptian antagonisms or even the profound antagonism of the classes in Egypt itself. These conflicts are much more likely, particularly in view of the approaching economic crisis, to become greatly aggravated in the near future.