

/LMB.

873/1/48

CONFIDENTIAL.

BRITISH EMBASSY,

CAIRO.

11th August, 1948.

16 AUG 1948

SENT TO DEPT.

5425

Dear Department,

(ORD copy attached)

In your letter of 24th June, you invited our comments on your draft paper on Trade Unions in the Middle East. I attach notes by Audsley, the Labour Counsellor on the section dealing with Egypt.

2. These notes are of some length because we are anxious to assist you in the preparation of a concise but factually correct statement of the essential phases of the growth of the Egyptian Trade Union movement. We have refrained from commenting upon the earlier historical passages (Paragraphs 10 - 15) as we do not feel competent to criticise your draft in detail. The sources of information used by the author are not stated but hitherto we have relied on Mr. T.E. Evans' Confidential Report of July 1944 (Foreign Office reference J 2671/369/16). I presume that the author of your draft consulted this report, and it appears to us that several historical items from that report might with advantage have been used in place of, as we see it, less significant material included in the draft. Audsley suggests that the author should review paragraphs 10 to 15 in the light of Mr. Evans' report. It seems preferable for him to do so rather than that we should attempt to re-write the paragraphs, as he will have access to other documents from which he can quote and which are not available here. He may also be assisted by the attached extract from a book published in Egypt in 1946 (which we have found reliable in other respects although the standard of proof-reading is not high) and by a copy of the latest figures for Trade Union membership. Further, in our opinion, the historical development, while interesting, in itself scarcely deserves to be gone into in too great detail as it does not greatly influence the trade unions as they are to-day, and it occurs to us that the drafter might prefer to recast this section in a rather more condensed form.

3. Audsley has not attempted to bring your draft right up to date and has therefore not included reference in his remarks to recent events, except the brief note at the end of paragraph 29. There were for instance a number of arrests of Communists following the declaration of a state of siege in connection with the Palestine "war", but it is too early to assess the effect of this action and other measures taken by the Egyptian Government.

4. In your covering communication, you asked for an estimate of the stabilising influence of trade unions and the extent to which they might become a channel for Communist disruption. At present, their capacity for good or evil is largely determined by the leadership of each union and is restricted to the factory or establishment in which it functions. The stabilising influence can be

encouraged/...

Research Department,
Foreign Office,
London, S.W.1.

1	2	cms	PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE	ins	1	1	2
Ref:		FO 371/69282B				86000	
Please note that this copy is supplied subject to the Public Record Office's terms and conditions and that your use of it may be subject to copyright restrictions. Further information is given in the enclosed 'Terms and Conditions of supply of Public Records' leaflet							

- 2 -

encouraged by an intelligent attitude on the part of employers but what is required above all else is for the Government to adopt a constructive trade union policy. This has been impressed upon the responsible officials and others on innumerable occasions during the past three years but their attitude has been based upon repression and even antagonism. They assert that, apart from one or two isolated exceptions, the leaders are not competent to apply the principles of trade unionism as we know it and that to give them more authority, e.g. national bodies or a confederation, would allow the subversive elements to threaten the security of the country - by which they really mean the present social structure. It must be admitted that their fears have some foundation largely because the oriental mind has little depth, is frequently swayed by fanatical tendencies and is not always guided by unselfishness and service, in the broad sense, to others. But the march of events and the growth of workers' interest in their own well-being cannot be stemmed and sooner or later the Egyptian Government will be compelled to meet their obligations imposed by international agreements. Meanwhile, the communists make the best use of the material so readily available to them. So far, they have had only limited success in spreading their ideas through trade union channels; they normally favour the cell method, operating independently of, and often in opposition to, the unions. Nevertheless, the Government is not likely to allow the communists to capture any of the more influential unions, but if things are left to drift, there is always the danger that the more sober leaders may themselves lose faith in their power of obtaining improved conditions by democratic means; the sense of frustration is becoming more obvious.

Yours ever,

M. Spear

1	2	cms	PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE	ins	1	1	2
Ref:		FO 371/69282B			86000		
Please note that this copy is supplied subject to the Public Record Office's terms and conditions and that your use of it may be subject to copyright restrictions. Further information is given in the enclosed 'Terms and Conditions of supply of Public Records' leaflet							

DRAFT PAPER BY RESEARCH SECTION, F.O.
ON TRADE UNIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTED
IMPROVEMENTS

Para. 9. - Page 2 line 7. Before "power" insert the word "political". It is undesirable to underestimate the power an individual union may exercise within its own establishment; it is as a national movement i.e. either as national organisations of craft unions or as a confederation of Unions, that they are ineffective in the industrial relations between Government employers and workers. - see comments regarding para. 19.

"Fellahin class". It is most doubtful whether the fellahin are ready for any form of trade unionism; they are almost completely illiterate, have little or no interest in affairs outside the toil, sweat and anguish of their drab daily lives, have no understanding of the ideals and altruism (and, it must be admitted, material objectives) of democratic workers' institutions. In any case, agricultural workers have not normally played an important part in the growth of trade unionism anywhere and in Egypt, as in other similar countries, it is the towns that set the pace and call the tune. We suggest this sentence might be left out or given less prominence.

Page 3 line 1. The word "successful" seems unnecessary and add after federation "of Trade Unions or National Unions of crafts or occupations". "Extent of industrialisation". The description "modest extent" may give a wrong impression. Egypt is in many respect as highly developed as any country in the Middle East. The variety of her industries, their size and their importance to her internal economy must not be understated and the extent, variety and prospective growth of industrialisation provide excellent ground for the development of a strong stabilising T.U. movement. We suggest the sentence from "and" to "time" be replaced by "the organisation of most unions by individual establishments and not by trade or industry".

Page 3 line 3. We suggest "widespread" in place of "general".

Page 3 line 4 to end of para. We consider this too sweeping. Egypt is very vulnerable to strikes in the oil industry; for instance, a one-day strike of petrol-distribution workers in Cairo in February 1948 nearly stopped the city's traffic; the country is almost entirely dependent on kerosene for cooking purposes, and medical precautions at the time of the cholera epidemic were threatened by a strike at the Shell refinery at Suez; further more, industry runs largely on fuel oil. Serious results might also have followed from a recent strike of the Government's irrigation engineers. It is suggested therefore that the whole sentence might be omitted.

Paras. 10-15- See covering letter. Incidentally "Zein-ud-Din" himself uses the following spelling for his name:- Mohamed

1	2	cms	PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE	ins	1	2
Ref: FO 371/69282B			86000			
Please note that this copy is supplied subject to the Public Record Office's terms and conditions and that your use of it may be subject to copyright restrictions. Further information is given in the enclosed 'Terms and Conditions of supply of Public Records' leaflet						

2.

Ibrahim Zein-el-Din, and his union now uses the English title of "Union of Cairo Motor Drivers". The term "chauffeur" is misleading as most of his members are now commercial motor drivers. We feel that these paragraphs tend to overstate his influence, and that in his own interest, less prominence should be given to his name even to the extent of complete exclusion.

Para. 16. - The interest of the Egyptian Government in labour legislation dates back to 1930. Even before this there were orders dealing with the employment of children, unhealthy and dangerous trades and conciliation boards. In 1930 a Labour Office was set up, and the I.L.O. were asked to send a delegation to study working conditions and make recommendations regarding labour legislation. Mr. Harold Butler came to Egypt and presented his report in March 1932 which became the basis for a series of laws governing the employment of women and children (1933), hours of work in dangerous trades (1935), and workmen's compensation (1936).

Para. 18. - Page 5 line 8. Workmen's Compensation. The basic law had already been passed in 1936. The 1942 Law amplified this law by making it compulsory for certain employers to ensure against the risk of claims under the 1936 Act.

Last line. In the absence of Appendix 'A' we cannot comment.

Para. 19. - "Exclusion of the fellahin". Again we feel that this should not be given undue prominence (see our remarks on Para. 9); equally, if not more important at this stage, is the exclusion of Government and municipal employees and hospital workers. First importance should be given however to the restrictions on the formation of national craft unions and a Confederation; The former are permitted by Law 85 of 1942 but are discouraged by the Egyptian Government; the latter is prohibited by the same law. Other points which might be mentioned in this para. are the ban on political activities (on the whole, it may be desirable in the present stage of development) and the fact that advance notice of every meeting has to be given to the police who have the right to attend meetings.

Para. 24. - Line 5. "means of arbitration in labour disputes" should read "a better system of conciliation and arbitration in labour disputes".

Line 9 to end of Para. The Supreme Labour Council had already been set up in 1932 as a result of Mr. Harold Butler's recommendation. What happened in 1945 was that new life was infused into it. Its function remains that of a consultative body on labour legislation. The main criticisms that can be aimed at it are that it meets

1	2	cms	PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE	ins	1	1	2
Ref:		FO 371/69282B				86000	
Please note that this copy is supplied subject to the Public Record Office's terms and conditions and that your use of it may be subject to copyright restrictions. Further information is given in the enclosed 'Terms and Conditions of supply of Public Records' leaflet							

3.

too seldom, that representatives are nominated by the Government and are not elected delegates, that on the employers' side, the tendency is now to exclude the important foreign concerns from representation, and that on the workpeople's side the tendency is for the Minister of Social Affairs to nominate trade union leaders who have proved themselves to be submissive to Government influence. (Incidentally we find it best to avoid the use of the word "employee" owing to possible confusion with the French word "employé" in general use here in the restricted sense of clerical and administrative worker).

Para. 26 -

These strikes were also due to dissatisfaction with the inadequacy of wages. This paragraph should also contain a reference to the partially successful attempt in February 1946 made by a Students and Workers Committee (the workers' representatives were known Communists or fellow travellers) to organise a general strike as part of a large scale anti-British demonstration. The order to strike was made by the Committee without consultation with the T.U. Committees and was announced in the Egyptian newspapers the day before the strike was to take place. There was much confusion among the T.U. leaders. Some advised their members not to strike but intimidation prevailed; others supported the strike and in many cases the members followed the newspaper announcement without waiting for instructions from their leaders. The Strike was general in the large towns and disorders were serious. The Communists claimed the results as a victory for them. The political tension diminished soon afterwards - there was a change of Government - and the Students and Workers Committee was dissolved. A purge of leading communists in connection with strikes later in the year was followed by a period of relative quietness in T.U. affairs.

Paras. 27 - 30 - As these paras. have been compiled largely from recent despatches from us, we have taken the liberty of suggesting the basis of a revision of paragraphs 27 to the end :-

27. The most serious industrial strike during 1947 for which communist elements were responsible was at the Misr Spinning and Weaving Company's factory at Mehalla el Kobra which started on 2nd September 1947 and ended on 3rd October 1947. The Committee of the workers' Trade Union neither called the strike nor supported it at the outset, although subsequently they endorsed certain of the demands. The instigators were several members of the central communist organisation in Cairo (comprising the 2 groups Hameto and Shar which fused in July 1947) who had obtained employment at Mehalla under false names. One aim of these communists may have been to capture the Union (the largest and wealthiest in Egypt) but the more immediate object was probably to create an atmosphere of unrest favourable to the spread of communist ideas at Mehalla and in Alexandria. If it failed in the first aim, it largely succeeded in the second, being followed

1	2	cms	PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE	ins	1	2
Ref: FO 371/69282B			86000			
Please note that this copy is supplied subject to the Public Record Office's terms and conditions and that your use of it may be subject to copyright restrictions. Further information is given in the enclosed 'Terms and Conditions of supply of Public Records' leaflet						

4.

by a series of labour troubles in neighbouring textile and other factories in Alexandria, in most cases the focus of unrest lying outside the Unions concerned.

28. There are no Unions of any size owing direct allegiance to the communist movement, and it is significant that strike action due to communist instigation has normally arisen outside the framework of the Unions. A notable example of this was a callous sit-down strike of 1,500 male nurses and orderlies at the largest Government hospital in Cairo in April 1948; it is difficult to say whether the position would have been any different had the hospital workers been allowed by law to have a union.

29. There is what might be called a trade union section of the communist movement led by Youssef el Modarrek, a member but not an official of a small union of commercial employees. This group, which is in touch with Mustafa el Ariss, the Lebanese communist (see paragraph 68), poses whenever it can as representative of the Egyptian working class. Modarrek attended the W.F.T.U. Conference in Paris in September, 1945 with 2 colleagues, David Nahum and Murad el Caliuby, under the guise of delegates of Egyptian trade unions. In fact they were not delegates in any sense, not having been elected by anybody (Modarrek's own union refused to support him) and it is highly doubtful whether more than a small part of their expenses was paid from Egyptian trade union sources. Nevertheless, he and his associates had ample funds with which to indulge in extravagant living while in Paris and he was elected to the General Council of W.F.T.U. with David Nahum as his deputy. Following that Conference, this communist group attempted to form an underground congress early in 1946 but did not get beyond the issue of duplicated pamphlets. At present, it indulges in considerable propaganda activity and its latest venture is a Trade Union Information Bureau, which is an attempt to form some sort of federation in disguise and which because its objects are nominally educational, does not conflict with the ban in Law 85 of 1942. As an illustration of his desire to gain acknowledgement as leader of Egypt's trade unions, Modarrek applied to the Egyptian Government for permission to collect funds from Egyptian trade unions in support of the Sudan railway strikers in March 1948; this was a clever move, as for political reasons there was much uncritical sympathy with the strikers and the request might have caught the Government off their guard. However the strike ended before the question was decided. The whole internal organisation of Egyptian trade unionism is so unsystematic that it is difficult to estimate with any accuracy the amount of support which Modarrek and his communist co-operators command, but there is a widespread conviction that the movement to the left has been accelerated during the last 12 to 18 months because of the growing feeling among the workers and the effendi class that only drastic measures will put an end to the appalling social conditions and inequalities that exist and that communism seems to offer

1	2	cms	PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE	ins	1	1	2
Ref:		FO 371/69282B			86000		
Please note that this copy is supplied subject to the Public Record Office's terms and conditions and that your use of it may be subject to copyright restrictions. Further information is given in the enclosed 'Terms and Conditions of supply of Public Records' leaflet							

5.

the only sure means of providing such measures. A more recent illustration of the activities of these communists was the preparation in May 1948, by a body calling itself "The Congress of Egyptian Trade Unions", of a pamphlet entitled "The Trade Union movement in Egypt". A copy was sent to the Secretariat of World Federation of Trade Unions, and was quoted in this Information Bulletin No. 11 (61) dated 15th June. *Cairo*

30. On 31st December, 1947 there were 441 trade unions grouping 91,604 members. These show a decrease on earlier figures, but this does not mean a decline in the real strength of trade unionism; the decrease is due rather to the lapsing of minor unions through inactivity. The unions of workers at the larger industrial undertakings are becoming well-established and have won strength through their successes at Conciliation Boards. But the standard of knowledge even in matters such as labour legislation, which affect them closely, is still appallingly low and the officials are very reliant on outside legal advice. The members are open to demagogic influence and officials can scarcely be expected to develop long-sighted views either as to the future of their own unions or the position of the Egyptian working-class generally. In an attempt to raise the standard of a number of officials and to counteract possible communist influence, the Egyptian Government sent a mission of trade union leaders to England in June, 1946 to study English methods. The visit appeared a success at the time, but did not prove to have the desired effect on the return of the mission, largely because no plans were made by the Egyptian Ministry of Social Affairs to make use of the knowledge and experience the Mission had acquired. Also, the effect of their visit was to a great extent nullified by the violent anti-British campaign which was in full blast on their return. For political reasons, a repetition of this mission is not now possible, but among Government officials it is recognised that something of this sort is what Egyptian trade unions need more than anything else. Given an improvement in the knowledge and sense of responsibility of their leaders, the trade unions could play an important part in the social betterment of their country, particularly if they could have some central organisation for democratic discussion not under communist control. - see comments regarding para. 19.]

1	2	cms	PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE	ins	1	2
Ref: FO 371/69282B			86000			
Please note that this copy is supplied subject to the Public Record Office's terms and conditions and that your use of it may be subject to copyright restrictions. Further information is given in the enclosed Terms and Conditions of supply of Public Records leaflet						

EXTRACT FROM:- ME. ZAKI BADAOUTI: LA LEGISLATION
DU TRAVAIL EN EGYPTE: ALEXANDRIE 1946.

LES SYNDICATS OUVRIERS.

HISTOIRE DU MOUVEMENT OUVRIER EN EGYPTE.

Les anciennes corporations.

En Egypte, comme en tout pays, la petite industrie a été longtemps accaparée par des corporations de métier. Au XIe siècle, le régime corporatif existe au Caire et, à sa tête, se trouve un fonctionnaire, le "contrôleur général" ou "cheikh des cheikhs", chargé de la haute surveillance de l'industrie et s'occupant à la fois de la bonne exécution du travail, de la loyauté dans l'usage des poids et mesures, de la voirie, de l'hygiène et de la solution des conflits entre patrons et ouvriers. (ff)

Sous son autorité, fonctionne une organisation corporative très voisine de celle que nous avons rencontrée en Europe au Moyen Age. Dans chaque métier, les maîtres travaillent avec leurs ouvriers et leurs apprentis. La profession a un chef, le "cheikh", nommé chaque année par acclamation: il a, dans ses attributions, la discipline du métier: il inflige aux membres de celui-ci des amendes ou même des peines corporelles, comme l'emprisonnement et la bastonnade, en cas de contravention aux règlements, il intervient dans les différends entre acheteurs et vendeurs, enfin il assure le placement des ouvriers. Pour devenir patron, l'ouvrier doit faire un "chef-d'oeuvre", qui sera exposé devant tous les maîtres de la corporation; puis, après enquête du cheikh, le postulant est admis à la maîtrise par les rites de la "Fête du Ceinturon."

La conquête turque de 1517 fut désastreuse pour l'industrie Egyptienne et la décadence de celle-ci ne fit que s'accroître au cours du XVIIe et du XVIIIe siècles.

Lors de l'expédition d'Egypte, Bonaparte régleme à nouveau les métiers et crée toute une industrie à l'européenne, puis Mohamed Ali tente d'introduire dans le pays la grande industrie, en même temps qu'il s'efforce d'accaparer la petite; il soumet cette dernière à un régime officiel, prend les artisans à sa solde et leur fournit la matière première qu'ils doivent rendre sous forme de produit achevé. Cette centralisation à outrance constitue un véritable essai de collectionnisme, dans lequel tout travail industriel est fait sur l'ordre de l'Etat et pour le compte de celui-ci; elle ne réussit pas et disparut avec son créateur.

Ces deux interventions de Bonaparte et de Mohamed Ali précipitent la chute du régime corporatif: "le contrôleur général" n'a bientôt plus qu'un titre honorifique; Suid Pacha ôte aux cheikhs des corporations le droit de punir et Ismail Pacha en fait des fonctionnaires chargés de lever l'impôt qui correspond à la patente.

(ff) Voir Germain Martin. -- Les bazars du Caire.

1	2	cms	PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE	ins	1	2
Ref. FO 371/69282B				86000		
Please note that this copy is supplied subject to the Public Record Office's terms and conditions and that your use of it may be subject to copyright restrictions. Further information is given in the enclosed 'Terms and Conditions of supply of Public Records' leaflet						

(2)

Peu à peu, et surtout depuis l'occupation anglaise de 1882, les corporations perdent leurs dernières attributions officielles; le Décret du 9 Janvier 1890, relatif à l'impôt des patentes, proclame le libre accès à toutes les professions et supprime l'obligation de l'apprentissage. Aujourd'hui, il n'existe plus entre les membres d'un même métier que des groupements volontaires, des corporations de fait.

Les syndicats modernes.

A côté des vestiges de ce régime corporatif, se sont formées, au début du présent siècle, quelques associations d'un caractère entièrement différent, répudiant toute attache avec le passé et copiées sur celles qui ont pris en Europe l'importance que nous savons. Elles répondaient aux mêmes besoins que les syndicats ouvriers européens et ont les mêmes tendances; aussi sont-elles écloses dans les milieux où le travail est organisé d'après les méthodes modernes et, en particulier, dans les quelques grandes industries Egyptiennes, comme les chemins de fer et la fabrication des cigarettes. Leur personnel, exclusivement composé de travailleurs de fabrique, n'a rien de commun avec celui des petits métiers des souks ou bazars, où subsistent des corporations de fait; d'ailleurs, les artisans des souks méprisent les ouvriers de fabrique.

Comme toujours, les syndicats ouvriers sont nés à la suite des grèves, qui ont montré aux travailleurs l'utilité de grouper leurs forces: grèves des ouvriers cigarettiers en 1899 et en 1903, grèves des tramways du Caire en 1908, des cochers en 1909. La plus ancienne d'entre elles est la "Ligue Internationale des Ouvriers de la Fabrique Matossian" (fabrique de cigarettes), qui fut créée le 2 Août 1908; elle fut bientôt suivie, le 17 Octobre de la même année, par la "Ligue Internationale des Ouvriers Cigaretteurs et Papetiers du Caire".

M. Vallet (44), qui les a étudiés avec soin, constate qu'au 1er Janvier 1911, onze associations ouvrières avaient été fondées au Caire. La plus importante de ces associations, est le Syndicat des Œuvres Manuelles, ils sont 3000 membres.

La déclaration de la guerre en 1914 et la proclamation de la loi martiale provoquèrent la fermeture des syndicats, ce qui marque un arrêt du mouvement ouvrier à cette époque.

Les ouvriers jouèrent dans la grande guerre un grand rôle. En effet, les autorités militaires britanniques employèrent alors un nombre considérable d'entre eux qui se distinguèrent dans les travaux divers et firent preuve d'adresse, voire de compétences. Ces ouvriers subirent et supportèrent à cette période les plus rudes épreuves, si bien que les autorités militaires britanniques rendirent hommage à leurs efforts et à leur contribution à la campagne de Palestine.

Le marasme qui régnait dans le pays, grâce à la crise qui y sévissait avant cette guerre prit fin peu à peu.

(44) Voir, Contribution à l'étude de la condition des ouvriers de la grande industrie au Caire.

Ref.: FO 371/69282B

86000

Please note that this copy is supplied subject to the Public Record Office's terms and conditions and that your use of it may be subject to copyright restrictions. Further information is given in the enclosed 'Terms and Conditions of supply of Public Records' leaflet

(3)

Les routes étant fermées à cause des hostilités, plusieurs produits manquèrent sur place et l'Egypte eut besoin de travailleurs. Ainsi, les chômeurs eurent du travail et le nombre des ouvriers employés dans les industries nouvelles atteignit un chiffre considérable.

En 1919, un esprit nouveau souffla sur le pays. La nation Egyptienne proclamait sa volonté de vivre désormais, indépendante. Elle se souleva comme un seul homme pour revendiquer ses droits. Elle ne recule pour assurer le triomphe de sa grande cause devant aucun sacrifice. Les syndicats eurent alors une activité des plus grandes, ils apportèrent leur contribution au mouvement national et proclamèrent les justes demandes des travailleurs. A la fin de cette même année un arrêté ministériel tenta de reconcilier patrons et ouvriers, essayant de leur trouver un terrain d'entente. C'était un premier pas officiel, dans la voie de la reconnaissance du mouvement syndical par l'Etat.

Le nombre de ces syndicats a augmenté depuis lors. Le 27 Février 1921, s'est fondée une C.G.T. Egyptienne, qui a reçu l'adhésion de 22 syndicats.

Alors les ouvriers groupés en leurs syndicats, proclamèrent leurs justes revendications et appuyés par cette union qui fait la force, purent faire entendre leur voix dans la mêlée. Mais une législation reconnaissant le syndicalisme, comme un organisme social, n'existait pas encore. Les ouvriers n'avaient entre leurs mains, pour faire respecter leurs droits qu'une seule arme: la grève. Ils en usèrent si bien qu'une loi interdisant les grèves fut promulguée en 1923. Et les divers gouvernements qui se succédèrent durant cette période agitée, opposèrent aux syndicats une résistance acharnée qui alla parfois jusqu'à la violence. La classe ouvrière dans cette noble lutte eut à subir alors de grands et lourds sacrifices. Mais en dépit de ces vexations les ouvriers ne sentirent nullement diminuer leur foi en leurs principes syndicalistes et continuèrent de plus belle, à lutter avec cette confiance qui est le propre de ceux qui croient en la justesse de leur cause. Le premier résultat obtenu, fut la récréation en 1930 de la Fédération des Syndicats des Ouvriers d'Egypte sous le patronage de l'honorable El Nabil Abbas Halim. Cette fédération, qui a une tendance indépendante revint à grouper sous son signe la majorité des syndicats du pays.

En 1935, une scission s'est produite au sein de la Confédération Générale pour des raisons politiques, une confédération fut créée sous le patronage de S.E. Hamdy Seif El Nasr Pacha. Elle a une tendance wafdiste.

Le mouvement ouvrier Egyptien et le mouvement international.

Dès que la Fédération des Syndicats eut affirmé son existence, sa voix se fit entendre au delà de la frontière du pays. A cette époque une conférence internationale ouvrière était tenue à Madrid. L'Egypte y participa entendue par ses camarades du monde entier. La conférence décida alors d'adresser au Gouvernement Egyptien ses protestations pour les persécutions dont l'ouvrier égyptien était l'objet. Les délégués allèrent même jusqu'à demander à leurs gouvernements respectifs de faire des

(4)

remontrances au Gouvernement Egyptien à ce sujet. D'autre part, le Secrétaire de la Fédération Internationale fut chargée de se rendre en Egypte afin de mener une enquête sur les doléances des ouvriers égyptiens. Malgré les obstacles dressés par le Gouvernement, la Fédération des Syndicats d'Egypte dont l'attention était toujours en éveil permit au délégué d'étudier la situation. Ce dernier, convaincu de la justesse des demandes des ouvriers, présenta au Gouvernement Egyptien un rapport dans lequel il souligna la nécessité de délaborer une législation ouvrière.

En recevant le rapport, le Gouvernement Egyptien, perplexe entra en rapport avec le Bureau International du Travail, lui demandant d'envoyer un délégué afin d'étudier le problème du travail en Egypte. Le délégué en question fit à son tour un rapport qu'il acheva ainsi:

"Ce sont des questions dignes d'intérêt, leur rapport avec la politique générale et c'est sur leur exécution que repose le bien-être du pays à l'avenir. L'Egypte ne pourra jamais aboutir au progrès matériel auquel elle a droit si elle ne réalise, en même temps, le progrès de la classe ouvrière".

Le résultat de ce rapport ne se fit pas attendre. Le Gouvernement Egyptien entreprit quelques-unes des réformes qui y étaient préconisées.

Le mouvement syndical resta stationnaire jusqu'en 1942. A cette date, le Gouvernement, prévoyant l'ampleur de la réaction ouvrière après la guerre, décida de créer un statut légal aux syndicats. La Loi No. 85 de 1942 fait époque dans l'histoire syndicale égyptienne. Elle permet l'institution de syndicats, sans déterminer avec précision leur forme. Mais dans l'ensemble, son esprit permettait de poser en règle que les syndicats ne s'étendraient pas aux ouvriers de toute une profession; mais essentiellement à ceux d'une même entreprise; des exceptions notables se firent toutefois jour par la suite. Il faut ajouter que les ouvriers agricoles, n'ont pas encore le droit de se syndiquer. Dès la parution de la loi, soixanteneuf syndicats furent fondés. En 1943, cent quatre-vingt-treize syndicats furent formés. En 1944, le nombre des ouvriers syndiqués est de 94.741, chiffre officiel, qui ne correspond pas exactement à la réalité.

Les syndicats ont grandement progressé dans l'organisation de leur travail. Ils agissent de plus en plus fréquemment dans l'intérêt des ouvriers individuels en conflit avec leurs patrons, dans les litiges qui sont jugés à l'amiable par le Bureau du Travail, il sont souvent consultés.

Ils se chargent souvent des recours et des soins médicaux aux ouvriers malades ou nécessiteux. Et, à cet effet, ils ont constitué des réserves financières importantes. C'est ainsi qu'ils ont pu ramasser les sommes nécessaires au départ de la Délégation Egyptienne au Congrès Mondial des Syndicats à Paris.

Les syndicats désirent être consultés également dans la rédaction des lois sociales.

**LIST OF ACTIVE TRADE UNIONS IN EGYPT
REGISTERED WITH THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT AS AT 31st DECEMBER 1947.**

INDUSTRY OR TRADE	NO. OF UNIONS	NO. OF MEMBERS	AVERAGE MEMBERSHIP	% OF TRADE UNION MEMBERS IN INDUSTRY
Vegetable food processing	37	4,956	134	11
Animal food processing	16	3,418	214	40
Drinks	4	574	143	2
Tobacco	6	2,062	344	13
Extraction of oils & fats	11	1,210	110	16
Chemical industries	10	1,504	150	11.5
Paper & Paper goods manufacture	1	112	112	1.5
Printing, book-binding & photography	7	936	134	18.5
Rubber manufacture	3	246	82	64
Scientific instruments, jewelry & other precious goods.	1	216	216	19
Hides, Leather, furs, boots and shoes	14	1,400	100	11.5
Textile industries	27	31,999	1,185	25
Clothing manufacture	9	970	107	7
Hairdressing, beauty culture, dyeing & cleaning	8	1,109	138	6
Metal and metal goods manufacture	12	911	76	3.5
Machines & machine tools	7	1,074	153	20
Woodworking, cane, wicker and basket work	10	1,219	121	12
Vehicle manufacture & repair, transport	82	16,460	201	71.5
Mineral fuel processing	1	167	167	91
Gas & electricity generation & distribution, water distribution, irrigation	4	1,259	315	8
Building materials, glass and pottery	19	2,045	107	17.5
Building contracting	17	1,791	105	16
Public works contracting	2	279	139	53
Construction & maintenance of roads & bridges	1	84	84	20
Mines	4	1,534	383	32
Salt works	1	1,208	1,208	94
Other industries	58	5,944	102	4.5
Total industries	372	84,687		19.5
Commerce	69	6,917		1.5
	441	91,604		6