

do what I wanted. This is almost exactly what happened. It is true that after graduation in 1951, I went to Jordan and practiced medicine until 1957. I only did that because it was the passageway and means to get in touch with the masses. Being a doctor was a necessary cover, for social and security reasons, at that time. In 1957, after the coup against Nabil's nationalist government in Jordan, I had to go underground. The question of devoting my life completely to the national struggle was no longer subject to discussion, neither for me or for my mother. In this way, I was able to successfully coordinate between my mother's wishes and the decision I had made in 1948, to devote my life to national struggle.

*The people of Yemen know you as one of the militants who has stood with the Yemeni revolution from the beginning. Exactly when did this link start?*

This relationship started in 1959, when the Arab National Liberation Movement (ANM) initiated its branch in Yemen. In the summer of 1959, we received a letter from the leaders of the ANM branch in Cairo. In this letter they said that they had several comrades graduating and leaving Cairo that year - from Libya, Sudan, Bahrain and Yemen. The Cairo branch requested our advice. What should we say to them since the movement didn't have branches in these four countries? The leaders of the ANM felt that this was a rare chance to establish branches in these countries. Therefore our answer to these comrades was: Send them to Damascus for a special training session enabling them to initiate work for the movement in these countries. I remember that special session very well: the subjects raised by the ANM leaders and myself. I remember the warm, comradely atmosphere that prevailed. I also remember delivering the closing speech, assigning these comrades responsibility for establishing branches in these countries. That was the beginning.

As for the October 14th Revolution, what I remember very well is that some comrades from the command of the branch in southern Yemen asserted that conditions were ripe for armed struggle against British colonialism, especially after the September revolution in northern Yemen (1962). They had thus formed a political front, called the National Front, and arranged many things like the platform for the front and the political communications needed in the country as a base to support the revolution. They wanted the ANM, that was based in Beirut at the time, to get in touch with Abdel Nasser to obtain support for the revolution. The ANM arranged the link. Since that time, we have had a close, warm relationship with the Yemeni revolution. We have been proud of this relationship, previously in the ANM, and since in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

This relationship is the most precious thing we have had to offer to the glorious October 14th Revolution that produced the first peasants and workers state in the Arab world. This may sound like any other statement, but to me it has a very deep, emotional significance: Democratic Yemen is the first Arab country to reflect the political line of the struggling Arab workers and peasants, that will help the working class to achieve all of the national goals.

When the great October Revolution was established as the first peasants and workers state in Russia, its value was not only for the vanguards, or that it founded a state for workers and peasants in Russia. Its value was that the working class of the world now has a base to rely on in its struggle. Now as

Arabs and Palestinians, we rely on the great October Revolution of the Soviet Union, and on the first workers and peasants state in the Arab world. My words may sound emotional or like wishful thinking, but in fact it is more of a symbol: As the October Revolution in South Yemen rose to fight Great Britain in order to achieve the people's aims, in the same way, with serious, protracted struggle, the Arab national liberation movement and the Arab working class will achieve their goals, relying on the great October Revolution and on the October 14th Revolution in the Arab world.

*In the light of your close relationship with the October 14th Revolution, how do you evaluate the experience of the past years, from the beginning of your relationship to the birth of the Yemeni Socialist Party, as a vanguard experience in the Arab world?*

It is, in fact, a vanguard experience; we all know the situation of the people of South Yemen before gaining independence on November 30, 1967. We all know about the attempts to limit the victory you accomplished with the departure of the British forces, to a superficial form of independence leading to a state with a flag, a national anthem and a seat at the UN, like the 21 other independent states in the Arab world.

The struggle that went on before independence, between the National Front and the front of Makawi and Assnaj, was about the contents of independence: Would the bourgeoisie reap the benefits and things stop at that point, or would the liberation battle be transformed into a national democratic revolution? The comrades that led the battle against Makawi and Assnaj, either instinctively or consciously, had this perception in mind, and they won. Now we know the meaning of winning such a battle. Maybe at that time, the masses in Yemen said that they didn't want any disturbances or internal fighting, because the main enemy was Britain and its colonial forces. That is true, but we realize the difference between a liberation movement led by the bourgeoisie and its representatives, and one led by the toiling classes and their representatives.

Before independence, you won the first round: the battle to transform the liberation struggle to a national democratic revolution. After that, the revolution went through a stage from 1967 to July 1969, with vacillation between transforming to a real national democratic revolution, or reverting to a revolution in favor of the bourgeoisie. The event (Corrective Movement) of 1969 terminated this vacillation. The October 14th Revolution, which had registered victory over the British and the front of Assnag, now transformed into a national democratic revolution.

At this stage, the external enemy, Arab reaction and imperialism, sensed the danger of this revolution. When the British forces departed on November 30, 1967, imperialist Britain and America may have been hoping that after independence, there would be a regime that was totally immersed in its own interests, and that the revolution would stop there, with a national regime, but no future outlook. Then, after 1969, the enemy camp felt the danger of the situation, and the revolution started facing very serious external attacks which lasted almost seven years. These attacks aimed to crush the revolution and its experience. This reminds me of the external attacks on the great October Revolution, that lasted until 1929. You, in this country, faced external attacks until the mid-seventies, aiming to destroy this regime, its crystallizing outlooks and future development.