

# Mubarak - Sadat in Disguise

## Mubarak Involves Egypt Deeper in Camp David

Interview with Abdullah Diab, famous progressive Egyptian economist



«Warming up the cold peace» - Egypt's prime minister lights Peres' cigarette.

What is your opinion of the meeting that took place between Mubarak and Peres in Alexandria? What are its motives and how do you evaluate the Ifran meeting between King Hasan II and Peres?

First, I would like to draw attention to the short time period between these meetings. This confirms that the first meeting was in preparation for the second. The first meeting was to test the reaction to an Arab leader meeting with an Israeli official. We note here that the Mubarak regime was the only one to declare support to the Hassan II-Peres meeting. Mubarak himself supported this step, though he belittled it in comparison to the big step taken by Sadat when he visited Jerusalem. Mubarak considers Sadat's step as the main step that opened the doors to the peace process, while the Hasan II-Peres meeting was just another step on the same road.

Before the Alexandria summit, Mubarak was claiming that he was not involved in the Camp David process. To prove his claims, he said that he had never met with any of the Zionist leaders.

In his meetings with some of the opposition forces, Mubarak always insisted that the special relations with the U.S. were necessary, since Egypt suffered many economic difficulties. Mubarak said he had to have special relations with the international financial institutions, the same institutions that represent neocolonialism. Mubarak always expressed disgust that the day would come when he would have to deal with the Zionist entity directly. He said he would rather die first.

There were other tricks Mubarak pulled to contain and split the ranks of the progressive national movement, such as claiming that he was «a democrat», while all the emergency rules and regulations, that grew much more in his term, make speaking of democracy a deception. The torture of the political prisoners by the police, and the sentences passed against progressive militants, only prove the deception of his claims. Mubarak repeatedly threatened the opposition forces, in order to prevent them from going beyond certain limits. What Mubarak called «the national issues» are considered off-limits. These include the special relations with the U.S. and adhering to Camp David. Not to agree with him about these «national

issues» means, in his view, going beyond the limits of democracy, which could lead to a «dark fate». By this, he is referring to the possibility of a military coup lead by Abu Gazala.

The possibility of a military coup is very limited, first, because Mubarak himself is part of military institution. Second, the US government, that has gone through a bitter experience with military regimes in Latin America, no longer objects to dependent, multi-party, liberal regimes, that basically have a coalition of two main parties in power. The two parties are from the same class, have the same aims, and alternate in the government, in addition to other smaller parties, for decoration. The two main parties in Egypt are the National Party, and the Wafd party. Therefore, to speak of the «military option» is only an attempt to blackmail the national and democratic forces.

Third, after he was inaugurated, Mubarak convened an economic conference in February 1982. In the conference, he replaced the open door policy of importing consumer goods, with the open door policy of producing goods locally. Actually, Sadat spoke of the same idea two years before he was assassinated. Sadat also attacked parasitism. He said it was a vague concept, and that the parasitic bourgeoisie was undefined and not represented in specific individuals.

Mubarak's slogan of opening the door for production meant an attempt to develop industries in Egypt, directed toward serving the vast majority of the masses who have a very limited income, but not- Mubarak said- to serve the privileged elite. He also claimed it was meant to minimize dependency on imports. However, none of the positive recommendations, including the ones proposed by the liberals in the conference, were taken into consideration.

The February 1985 conference, confirmed that the promise Mubarak had made to himself, was reversed. The class differences, and the exploitation of the poor masses, are going according to the directions of the World Bank, which always aimed at not resolving the economic crisis of any country, as much as it increases the burden of the poor masses.

More than 100,000 workers of the public sector participated in a series of strikes, directed against the authorities. Although the workers raised economic slogans, collision with the owners, i.e., the state, turned the strikes into a political struggle.

We could then say that the objective conditions on the economic and, consequently, the political level, and on the level of relations with the US, paved the way for the Mubarak-Peres meeting. We note that Sadat's visit to Jerusalem followed the January 18-19th mass uprisings. The Mubarak-Peres meeting follows many uprisings and strikes, such as the strike of the workers at Al Mahalla, the railroad workers' strike and the revolt of the central security forces.

We can look at the issue from another perspective. The production policy of the last eleven or twelve years is one of free capitalist development. This entails dependency on foreign and Arab capital that has the financial capacity to fill the gap between the funds available and the need for investment. The foreign and Arab capital has the technological capability to boost the Egyptian economy, but foreign investment means foreign capital's control, and thus financial dependency on the imperialist camp. The imperialists never give us advanced technology. They retain control of the technological operations, and only allow us to use their technology in minor industries. Of course, the main profit goes to the multinational companies and foreign capital, whereas the local capitalists get a very small percentage of the profit.

Mubarak's era has contributed greatly to the process of subordinating the national and progressive movement by containing it. The national and progressive forces were betting on the government, and on a guided capitalist system that would rescue Egypt from its crisis, while we all know that only a socialist system will rescue the underdeveloped countries. In order to prepare the people to accept foreign capital, they have to have hopes that a guided capitalist system will solve the crisis. All the aid that was given to Egypt was part of an attempt to keep the economy afloat until the process of class, social and political subordination is completed. Egypt became involved in endless debts. It became very dependent on foreign imports-at least 40% of its food needs and 75% of its wheat requirements. This is one of the means to subordinate Egypt. ▶