

Egypt exports strawberries to Europe and imports wheat instead, which is double subordination. Egypt's exports are subject to the vacillation of the European market. The European countries could stop importing from Egypt to exert political pressure. They also have the final say in what to export to Egypt. Egypt was pulled into this circle due to the interests of the ruling coalition.

According to the minimum estimates, Egypt's debts reached \$34 billion in 1976. In the next two years, the bulk of this debt is due. Egypt will have to pay back \$5 billion. These are the loans that were used to cover the deficit. The imperialists and the International Monetary Fund created this situation in order to make it more difficult for Egypt to correct the deficiency, hoping that Egypt will have no alternative but to give more concessions to foreign capital, without any conditions. The General Motors deal is the best example of how the Egyptian economy is entering into the next stage. In the next stage, imperialism imposes its hegemony on certain economic sectors as a whole, such as the car industry. The General Motors deal takes us back to two years ago when Mubarak raised the slogan of a «100% Egyptian car». A country that barely has bread is planning to make cars? The regime called for bidders, and many multinational companies submitted bids. The worst bid was that of General Motors, yet the government awarded the contract to this company, because Egypt's debts, specifically the military debts, were costing Egypt \$600 million a year. The international interest rate is less than 7%, while Egypt pays the US 13-14% in interest. Last year, Egypt failed to pay back the interest on military loans, which alone amounted to \$550 million, and Washington threatened to cut off aid if the loans weren't paid back! How to get out of this trap? In order for Egypt to pay it back, the US government gave a green light to some American banks to loan Egypt \$550 million at a 20% interest rate.

The latest US-Egyptian joint military maneuvers are another example of the concessions the regime gives due to the crisis. The maneuvers took place off the Libyan coast, while Washington continues its threats not only against Libya, but against Syria as well, in an attempt to liquidate what the US considers the last two bases of resistance. These maneuvers were only part of the US scheme to subjugate the whole area. Egypt is going along with the imperialist schemes to impose US hegemony on the Arab area as a whole.

The Palestinian question is the central issue that, according to the US schemes, should be finished. This is why the idea of self-rule was inserted in the second part of the Camp David accords.

In an attempt to distinguish himself (from Sadat), Mubarak tried to make the Egyptian-Israeli relations seem frozen in regards to the Taba question. This is what is known as the 'cold peace' that was supposed to be turned into a real peace: a defined relationship with the Zionist enemy - full recognition, including giving 'Israel' the right to have international arbitration over a piece of our land (Taba). If this principle is approved concerning Egyptian land, it is possible afterwards to implement it on parts of Palestine (the West Bank and Gaza Strip), the Golan Heights, Jordan, etc. Warming up the 'cold peace' is connected with the Marshall plan, which is in reality the Peres-Khalil (Egypt's prime minister) plan. The Marshall plan entails subduing the whole area to the interests of US imperialism. Israel plays the most important role in implementing the plan, due to its strategic relations with the US. The Marshall plan aims at liquidating not only the Palestinian cause and national liberation movement, but also the Arab national liberation movement in Egypt, Syria and every Arab country.

There is talk in the Arab political arena of the necessity of working to return the Egyptian regime to the ranks of Arab 'solidarity' and the Arab League. There are two main schools of thought. Some feel that Egypt's return can only be secured by pressuring the regime, boycotting and isolating it locally and on the Arab level. Others think this could be achieved by lifting the measures taken

against the regime. What is your view?

I believe that both means will be useless. What is the nature of the Egyptian regime? The regime's class structure consists of the big Egyptian bourgeoisie - its feudal, industrial and financial strata, etc. It has parasitic bourgeois features and made its fortune through its position in the bureaucracy and by exploiting the public sector. It is organically connected with foreign capital, specifically US capital. It is very contradictory to speak of the possibility of this regime's getting closer to the Arabs on an anti-imperialist basis, no matter how much pressure is applied. Everyone who really knows the nature of the regime thinks that this is a remote possibility.

Such talk goes back to the illusions about making a distinction (between Sadat and Mubarak). It is often said that Sadat staged a coup against the Nasserites, although he was one of them, so why can't Mubarak stage a coup, although he is part of Camp David? This is very superficial thinking, because it ignores the vast difference between the two situations. Sadat took power at a time when the reactionary forces had already infiltrated and controlled most of the state institutions, including the army. Despite the fact that the army was very nationalistic, some reactionary forces had started to gain control over it. Nasser was aware of this fact. In 1969, Nasser said, «In Egypt, there is an organized reactionary party.» Sadat staged his coup, depending on these institutions. The main problem was that Nasser only stripped the reactionary forces of their political influence, without destroying their economic base. In the absence of democracy, these forces were able - during Nasser's regime - to grow up again within the state institutions.

Now, is a coup possible from within these institutions, even if we assume, for the sake of the argument, that Mubarak is not part of them? It seems impossible to change the regime under any kind of pressure. The regime will change only when all of these institutions change, and when its entire class structure changes.

However, under the pressure of the growth of the nationalist, democratic and revolutionary forces, the regime might give in and enact some superficial reforms. Reforms in any capitalist society are a step forward, because they are a partial concession. Whoever is betting on Egypt's return to the Arab arena or to an anti-imperialist position, without getting rid of the present regime, is dreaming.

If we look at the political map of the Arab world, we can see that it is possible for the regime to return to an Arab League where the majority of regimes are reactionary. The progressive regimes within the League are vacillating. The Egyptian regime's return will mean further regression of the League, especially since the mass movement is not yet mature enough to make radical changes in the area, in the near future.

The time has come to defeat the slogan of Egypt's return. We call upon the forces, who have genuine interests in ending colonization and liberating Palestine, to take the lead.

The basis for Palestinian national unity has been hotly debated. Relations with the Egyptian regime was one of the most hotly debated points. There are those who now say that breaking off relations with the Camp David regime should not be a condition for national unity, because this requires a long struggle. What is your opinion?

The PLO rejected Sadat's visit to Jerusalem. What is the excuse for dealing with the Egyptian regime after Mubarak threw away the fig leaf he was hiding behind, and is repeating the treason to a greater extent. This is the line of rightist Palestinians. Since Egypt will not return to the Arab fold for a long time yet, and will not make a positive contribution to solving the Palestinian question for a long time either, we should not wait till Egypt's situation changes. This defies all logic.

It seems strange to want to preserve relations with Egypt until a change occurs in the future, yet not want to preserve a positive and sound relation with Syria. Syria is a country which shares borders with 'Israel' and has a nationalist government. Why would anyone wish to preserve a relationship with Camp David and ignite a crisis with Syria, converting secondary contradictions to primary ones? This is not because they are con-