

intensification of capitalist exploitation and how the capitalists throw the burden of the economic crisis on the masses' shoulders. Class polarization is assuming the following forms:

1. There are increasing uprisings of the popular masses to defend their interests - workers' strikes, peasant uprisings and broad student movements. For the first time in the history of Egypt, the peasants have begun to organize themselves for establishing a peasants' union. The working class is creating new forms of organizations for the struggle, such as committees to defend the public sector. Resentment and anger also extend to middle class professionals and intellectuals. We find even judges resorting to strikes to achieve their economic demands, in addition to university staff members. The solidarity of staff members and professors with the student movement increased as the students were struggling to remove guards at the university and to cancel the regime's control over the student unions. Resentment is even expressed by the central security forces, the main repressive organ of the ruling bourgeoisie.

2. There is increasing harmony between the state authority and big capital, and intermarriage between big capitalism and the bureaucratic capitalism. The role of the big bourgeoisie's organizations is prominent - the industrial association, the bank and commercial association. These function jointly with Arab, US, French and West German capital, and with the American Chamber of Commerce which includes 350 Egyptian companies! Most prominent was the role of the businessmen's association and its interrelation with the authority. All of these associations are alliances between private capital, the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, the representatives of the state and foreign monopoly capital.

3. The increasing gravity of the class struggle is annoying national bourgeois circles, even within the opposition alignments. The national bourgeoisie started to feel the danger threatening the capitalist system itself. This motivated it to call for erecting declared and undeclared bridges with the authority, and to seek the unity of the bourgeoisie. The national bourgeoisie called for reconciliation with the regime, and dia-

logue with the ruling party. It demanded the formation of a broad front of the five parties, including the ruling party.

4. There is an increase in instinctive hostility towards US imperialism, capitalism and the US schemes, but the masses' hostility lacks awareness of the dimension of the class struggle. Hostility is directed towards an amorphous enemy, represented in parasitic capitalism and corruption. This confusion intensifies attempts to water down the class struggle against the ruling big bourgeoisie, instead directing fire against the parasites. Recently, there was a call for the 'civic sector' to ally against the threats of a 'military coup', which in essence aims at watering down the class struggle.

5. The political alignment does not accurately reflect class interests, since the harsh restrictions on the right to organize prevent congruity between political and class alignment. The rule for parties, for example, prohibits political alignment on a class basis. It prohibits the formation of legal parties on a class basis. The latest election law consolidated this phenomenon, and imposed many 'marriages of convenience' between opposite forces. A clear example was the Muslim Brotherhood's joining ranks with the Wafd Party, and then with the Ahrar Party, after their compromise with the Umma Party failed.

Where do you place the religious trends on the map of social struggle? Is there cooperation among these trends? Is there an objective basis for cooperation between these trends and the working class in the struggle against Camp David?

The religious trends are not new phenomena in Egypt. They became prominent in the political arena during the economic crisis of the thirties. The Egyptian big bourgeoisie played a major role in embracing the Muslim Brotherhood groups that were formed during the government of Ismael Sidqi (one of the most prominent figures of the big bourgeoisie). Despite their huge membership, the Muslim Brotherhood groups were unable to achieve political weight. This was especially true after the exposure of their relations with the palace and the governments which represented only the elite. The Muslim Brotherhood tried to sabotage the national struggle; they declared their support to Sidqi the day the Egyptian national movement, led by the National Committee for Students and Workers, confronted the government and successfully combatted the planned agreement between Sidqi and British Foreign Secretary Bevin. The committee was formed by Egyptian communists, allied with other democratic elements.

During Nasser's regime, the religious trends went underground, due to the many blows that were dealt to them, and due to the national and social achievements made in this period. They appeared again after Sadat's May 15th coup in 1971. Sadat tried to rely on them to consolidate his social base. He released their prisoners and encouraged Muslim groups in the universities. He gave his blessings to their semi-fascist practices against Marxist and Nasserite trends in the universities, and enabled them to control the student unions. He also provided them with mosques and street corners as platforms for spreading their ideology.

Within a few years, the extremist Islamic trends had evoked the extremist trends in the Christian ranks. The religious trends serve as a reserve for the ruling bourgeoisie. Their policies serve the interests of the big bourgeoisie, especially the commercial bourgeoisie. This explains the support the religious trends receive from Arab oil capital, the Saudis in particular, and from big Egyptian capitalists. Everybody knows how Othman Ahmed Othman (wealthy, corrupt entrepreneur) embraced the Muslim Brotherhood when it was in conflict with the regime.

The Islamic groups were able to mobilize a broad sector of the petit bourgeoisie. The vast majority of their membership is students, professionals, craftsmen, small farmers and retailers.

The phenomenon of the religious groups is a complicated one which we cannot underestimate. We must differentiate

