

vocates reviving the Arab nationalist project with modifications to suit current conditions.

The ruling class, that advocates the first trend, is obviously no longer capable of achieving the nationalist tasks, such as Arab unity or liberating Palestine, for these demand an outright confrontation with imperialism and Zionism. This class is also incapable of achieving real socio-economic progress to the interests of the masses, for that would necessitate a confrontation with international capitalism.

The present official Arab leadership is impotent, economically and politically. On the economic level, the ruling class in most countries has led the Arab world into more integration in the international capitalist economy instead of, and at the expense of, achieving Arab economic integration. A distorted capitalism of a parasitic nature was formed, based on oil that will be depleted one day, unlike the land that is inexhaustible. The economy was further distorted by the focus of the capitalist class on non-productive sectors.

On the political level, the same ruling class guided most of the Arab countries into the lap of the capitalist countries, headed by the US, because its interests were directly linked with international capitalism. This class was unable to reconcile the aspirations for national independence and sovereignty on one hand and «international cooperation» on the other. Rather, it justified subordination in the name of «cooperation» between capitalist and underdeveloped countries. While imperialism is threatening Arab national security, the masses are being deluded that alliance with the US consolidates national security.

The present Arab leadership is impotent and any future leadership with the same orientation will repeat the same experience. Whether the goals is Arab unity or social progress, real change requires the development of a new leadership representing classes that have interest in such change. What is needed is to revolutionize the Arab nationalist movement in terms of ideology, programs and methods of struggle. This necessitates that the movement resolve its crisis and rise to lead the Arab national democratic revolution towards socialism.

THE ARAB ORDER AND THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION

The Palestinian popular uprising has further exposed the crisis of the ruling bourgeois. By setting a starkly contrasting example, the intifada confirmed the deterioration of the Arab order as a whole. Some Arab regimes have besieged the uprising through suspicious political schemes, such as Mubarak's initiative. They have pressured the PLO accept the US conditions for a political settlement. Most regimes have refrained from giving financial support to the uprising, despite their own decision; and many have repressed the mass movements in support of the uprising.

For two decades, the Arab bourgeois have worked diligently to force the Palestinian bourgeoisie to capitulate and to transform the PLO into an element of the existing Arab order. These attempts will continue as long as the Palestinian revolution, led by the PLO, stands as an exception to the general character of the Arab regimes. At this stage, the Palestinian bourgeoisie is striving for a Palestinian state. Therefore, it is to its interests to be in a position of confrontation vis-a-vis im-

perialism and Zionism, and consequently the Arab reactionary regimes.

The uprising shocked the Arab regimes that had expressed their readiness to capitulate to the imperialist and Zionist plans in the Amman Summit. Surprised and perplexed, these regimes were reduced to spectators, waiting for a quick end to the uprising in order to go on with their maneuvers, planned in the summit, to achieve a regional settlement at the expense of the Palestinian cause.

Throughout the first six weeks of the uprising, the structures of joint Arab action were out of function. The Arab League held its first emergency meeting for the foreign ministers, based on a Libyan initiative, in Tunis on January 23-24, 1988. Then it took a number of decisions: «to mobilize the Arab mass forces to rally around the heroic Palestinian uprising and to provide all forms of support to the struggle of the Palestinian people....» In the same period, the 18th congress of the Arab Parliamentary Federation was held in Tunis, and called for «allowing the Arab masses to participate in providing practical support for the Palestinian people in the occupied territories...»

True to form, however, most Arab regimes behaved in a totally opposite manner. Demonstrations and other forms of mass support to the uprising were brutally oppressed in more than one Arab country (Jordan, Morocco, Egypt). Except for the few visits of the Arab ministerial committee to the five countries with permanent seats in the UN Security Council, the Arab resolutions have never seen the light of day.

The first Arab summit for the uprising (Algeria, June 1988) was held three months after the Algerian initiative to call it, and after the uprising had been going on for six months, not to mention the attempts of some Arab regimes to delay the summit, hoping that the uprising would end before then.

In conclusion, the Arab regimes that paid lip service to the uprising, while in reality imposing a siege around it, have done so for three main reasons: First, they are unwilling to allow the uprising to continue and escalate, for this means an end to their hegemony over the Palestinian cause. Second, and equally important, they fear the uprising's repercussions and influence on the Arab masses. Third, the reactionary regimes are tied to US policies for maintaining the status quo in the region, and therefore submit to the US administration's wish to avoid the emergence of a Palestinian state.

Resources (Arabic)

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