

Movement, and the July 23rd revolution in Egypt (1952). These movements grew at this particular time to fill the vacancy created by the demise of the former leadership.

In terms of class structure, the former leadership of the Arab national liberation movement was replaced by the leadership of the petit bourgeoisie, which was more related to the masses and their motives than the feudal lords and the bourgeoisie. The fifties and sixties marked a new era in the history of the Arab national liberation movement. Prior to the crisis it is now suffering, it achieved many positive things.

The rise of the petit bourgeoisie

Concerning the crisis in the Palestinian revolution, when we say that the Palestinian bourgeoisie has failed and can no longer lead, we must at the same time remember that in the previous stage, the Palestinian revolution made real achievements under its leadership. The same applies to the new stage of the Arab national liberation movement, which was led by the July 23rd revolution in particular. Before exhausting its role, the new leadership achieved many things. Why were our masses so enthusiastic in their support of Nasser's leadership? Because many aims were fulfilled. In Egypt, the slogans were no longer only independence and dignity; they acquired a social touch. There was the law on land reform, distribution of land to the peasants, the start of cooperatives, nationalization of banks and foreign trade, the national battle to liberate Egypt from British colonialism, nationalization of the Suez Canal, the beginning of links with the socialist countries. There was Nasser's role in the nonaligned movement, which at that time was clearly anti-imperialist.

Moreover, the atmosphere generated by Nasserism affected all the Arab world. We saw the start of armed liberation struggles in Algeria, Yemen and Oman, all supported by Nasser's Egypt. There was Egypt's unity with Syria, which was fully supported by the Arab masses. There was the downfall of the monarchy in Iraq and later Libya, and the defeat of the feudal-subordinate capitalist coalition in Syria, etc.

Class Roots of the Crisis

Now, let us follow this petit bourgeoisie after its rise to power, remembering that things are dynamic; nothing is static. When it came to power, the petit bourgeoisie wanted to achieve the aims of the masses that were related to its own. Then, after a few years of struggle against imperialism, when this petit bourgeoisie started to acquire its own national market, a change occurred in its class interests. Through the public sector, the interests of this class grew. It obtained facilities and many privileges, and was able to accumulate capital. At the same time, the old system was not completely destroyed. Sectors of agriculture and manufacture were still based on private ownership. So this capital, that came into the hands of the bureaucratic petit bourgeoisie, was invested in partnership with the bourgeois and feudal classes that had been removed from power. Thus a link was forged between the petit bourgeoisie and the classes it had removed from power. This led to suppression of the masses, hesitancy in continuing the national democratic revolution, and diminishing the anti-imperialist trend.

This is what paved the way for the crisis that became apparent in 1967. Instead of the Arab regimes winning the war in 1967, or making it a prolonged war which could uproot imperialism and Zionism, the war and its aftermath deepened the trend to the right. After 1967, at the time when the masses demanded that Nasser remain in his position, he had the chance to radicalize the Arab national liberation movement. However, the class and economic structure of the regime was

stronger than Nasser's wishes. What happened in Sadat's era signified that the Arab national liberation movement, as led by the petit bourgeoisie, will come to an end. It will eventually reconcile its interests with those of Arab reaction, imperialism and even Zionism. The results of the 1967 war were a much deeper set-back for the Arab national liberation movement than that of 1948. In 1948, the Arab rulers were not able to liberate Palestine, but at least they refused to grant Zionism the legal right to occupy Palestine. Sadat, on the other hand, initiated cooperation not only with Arab reaction and imperialism, but also with Zionism.

Of course, other branches of the petit bourgeois Arab national liberation movement remained anti-imperialist to a certain extent. Yet what happened to the Egyptian regime is



The October Revolution gave a new incentive....

very likely to happen to the other national regimes which have the same class and ideological structure. What happened with the petit bourgeoisie which gained power in Iraq? It began as anti-imperialist in 1968, and did many things for the national and popular interests. Now it is taking the same path.

There is only one exception to this rule, and that is Democratic Yemen. Here there was also a nationalist revolution led by a petit bourgeoisie. The experience of Democratic Yemen shows that if there are a certain set of conditions, this class can achieve the aims of the national democratic revolution and embark on socialist construction. The required conditions include: developing a party based on Marxism-Leninism and democratic centralism, having real