

ition forces who participated in, or supported the dramatic visit.

The convergence of the two approaches and lines (those of the Palestinian right and Arab reaction) is not something new. It appeared tragically in the last PNC session where the conciliatory trend prevailed concerning several problems and proposed (imperialist) projects. This meant the policy of LAA'M (yes and no at the same time) and feeble slogans and formulas, such as the one that resulted as a compromise: «Closeness to the Egyptian regime as much as it distances itself from Camp David». This formula left the way open for contradictory interpretations and assessments, because in the final analysis it bows to the (leading) class structure and ideological basis, which allows for steering events according to desires. The danger of these fluctuations mounts in times of crisis and setbacks for the revolution, when polarization and social movement are active in the terrain of an atmosphere of defeatism. This was the bolster relied on by the supporters of the meeting with the Egyptian regime, considering this to be «implementing the resolutions of the PNC».

International media almost unanimously agreed that the primary beneficiary of the visit was the Egyptian regime. Here we have the right to ask: Did this spectacular occasion on the part of Fatah's leadership lead to pulling the Egyptian regime away from Israel? In reality, what happened was just the opposite: Egyptian-Israeli contacts and coordination were advanced to a higher level; the second part of Camp David and the Reagan plan were revived; channels were opened for broader and firmer cooperation under the pretext of the necessity of regaining the rights of the Palestinian people.

From the illusion of «closeness» to the art of national commitment

We reiterate that the issue is not merely one of «a meeting of a national movement leader with the president of a subordinate regime». It is much greater than that. It consists of a complete approach that requires taking practical steps towards a clearly defined path. Therefore, it cannot be covered by the curtain of «forgiving and forgetting». Nor can it be erased from the memory by the mere repetition of some statements emphasizing the «firmness» of positions against Camp David and the Reagan plan. Rather, a frank, critical assessment is required, one that is not confined to formalities, but deals with the substance of the matter.

We criticized the formula of «closeness as much as distancing» and noted its destructive results. This formula feeds the illusions of some factions of the nationalist opposition, while providing others with justifications for going back on many positions. It leads the most conscious masses to lose confidence in the leadership and struggle against the imperialist agreements and plans, especially abrogating Camp David.

The following is one example of the disastrous effects of the imagination of some elements of the opposition, who unwittingly

slipped into the kingdom of illusions, thus adopting and propagandizing the claims of the authority. Ibrahim Nafe wrote praising «the participation of Egypt in protecting the forces of Arafat during their trip to North Yemen». One of the opposition papers picked this up and inflated it beyond all limits, writing that President Mubarak «ordered the Egyptian Armed Forces, Air Force and Navy to protect the Greek ships carrying Arafat and the Palestinian fighters, since they came close to Egyptian territorial waters...». This was not confined to distortion of the news. The tragedy lies in the fact that the writer concluded, «This is the first time since the October War of 1973, that the Armed Forces of Egypt are assigned a task which places them in possible confrontation with the major enemy of Egypt and the Arabs, i.e., the Israeli Defense Forces who threatened Arafat and his fighters.»! Moreover, he continues the talk about «the beginning of Arab unity with a correct national strategy»!! Similar expressions appeared in a commentary in another issue of the same paper, while the other articles on the same subject differed. This «dischord» appears to reflect the view of certain individuals or a group.

Based on mutual criticism between allies, we cannot remain silent towards such reckless explanations. We must be vigilant about the confusion that is created in public opinion by such illusions. President Mubarak himself does not claim these «heroic actions». He emphasizes that he «obtained Israeli guarantees for safe passage for Mr. Arafat and his men». This means that he obtained a «permit» and gave the green light after consultations with Tel Aviv. What a difference there is between reality and this tragic, adventurous imagination!

In Egypt and on the Arab level, various «theories» have been advanced with the purpose of making the regime or some of its components look better. These «theories» are spread under the influence of partial reforms and changes that do not touch the essence of things, with the hope that the regime will respond favorably to the flexibility of the factions (advancing the «theories») by «getting close» to them. Some of these «theories» are:

-The «theory» of inheritance that considers the regime's present subordination as a «wrapped package» that unexpectedly fell on the shoulders of the new rulers. An honest, objective examination of the role of the regime's components during the Sadat era squarely refutes this «theory». President Mubarak himself does not deny that he was a «full partner», convinced of the essence of the policy. The changes in the methods of rule and the forms of exercising state authority is a different question that has its own reasons, which are beyond the scope of this article.

-The «theory» of changes, which are viewed as the transition to a position qualitatively different from the existing subordination. This too is denied by President Mubarak in all his statements. We witness not only a continuation of essentially the same situation, but also additions to the policy of Sadat, not pulling away from it. The set of developments that followed the killing of Sadat emphasizes this. All that was essential to