

Phases of the EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION

Khaled Mohei El-Din

THE REVOLUTION OF July 23rd, 1952, was not a matter of chance; it was the logical consummation of the liberation process which could not find any other outlet. In October 1951 the popular forces secured the repeal of the shameful 1936 Treaty with Britain. Guerilla actions in the Canal Zone grew into a popular armed movement, ready to grow over into a nation-wide, anti-imperialist struggle. The people mustered all their forces to achieve victory over imperialism.

The rulers never realized how deeply rooted the movement was. Consequently, they lagged behind, leaving the masses to a process of spontaneous development, at times even trying—without success—to stem their advance.

The masses forged ahead, calling for the abdication of the King and for a break with Britain. Yet the movement lacked real political leadership. Even the Lefts, taken by surprise, were unable to harness the wave, since at that time they were victims of police persecution, and also lacked experience of armed struggle. The inevitable result was the provocation in Cairo instigated and organized by reactionary elements and imperialism for purely reactionary ends.

Martial law was proclaimed, and was used to facilitate the arrest of progressives, nationalists and guerilla elements. The traditional rulers proved incapable of offering a solution that would satisfy the national aspirations. The moderates were scared and practically lost their bearings. Governments followed one another in quick succession.

In this situation the army emerged as the only national force which had not yet been hit. Its ranks were seething with revolution. The nationalist movement which swept the country found an echo among the army officers. The efforts of the reactionaries to use the army as a tool of direct suppression, against demonstrations and strikes, created direct contact between the army and the political events and gave the younger officers a feeling of real power. It also posed the vital question: why shouldn't this power become a weapon in the hands of the people and against the enemies of the people?

The army movement was the decisive answer to this question. It was

also the anticipated action and a direct result of the pre-revolutionary political crisis. It was such a natural reaction that none of the political forces opposed it.

The revolution took place only to find that the masses had lost confidence in the traditional leaders and in all constitutional and party formations.

It also discovered a void, no programmes, no clear-cut demands, no organized movement reflecting the real will of the masses. Immediately the revolution adopted a motto which had no social content but which could be accepted by all trends: unity, order and work.

The leaders of the revolution represented by a group of young officers possessed two specific features: firstly, profound faith in the cause of national independence coupled with a deep hatred for imperialism, the Palace and their agents and, second, independence from all other political forces and organizations and their resolve to safeguard this independence.

It was natural that this group should be surprised by the void, and should feel a disappointment which found expression in President Nasser's book *The Philosophy of the Revolution*.

The leaders had accomplished their mission. They stormed the strongholds of oppression, dethroned the despot and stood awaiting the holy march in close orderly ranks to the great goal.

They waited long, however. The masses did come. But how different is fiction from facts.

The masses did come. But they came struggling in scattered groups. The Holy March to the Great Goal was halted, and the picture in those days looked dark, dastardly and foreboding.

It was then that I realized with an embittered heart torn with grief that the vanguard's mission did not end at that hour, it had just begun.

The leaders of the revolution began to equip themselves to carry on with the government until they could translate their hopes and those of the masses into a crystallized idea and a defined programme.

Since the group was independent and unattached to any other political grouping, and because it came to power without any preliminaries, it began to develop its ideas and executive programmes through two channels:

(1) Legislation.

(2) An effort to approach the people through an organized political action independent of any previous trends.

THREE PHASES

All through its phases, the revolution moved through these two channels in a sincere and realistic fashion which was an expression of

the growth of consciousness among the leaders. It was also an expression of the relationship with the social consciousness and world events.

It is my belief that the revolution has passed through three phases:

First: The realization of national independence, 1952-56.

Second: The assurance of independence, the eradication of the last vestiges of imperialism and the initiation of economic development, 1956-1961.

Third: The phase of socialist conversion.

But before explaining these three phases let me say that no hard and fast divisions separated them. From the scientific point of view these divisions could not exist. All three were intermingled and telescoped; indeed the seeds of one phase could be sown in the previous one.

First Phase:

Its aims can be summed up as follows:

(1) To rally all the popular forces to achieve independence.

(2) To strike against reaction and the traditional politicians collaborating with imperialism and to abolish their influence, especially in the countryside.

(3) To create a settled climate for the new rule, to improve the economic situation and to introduce reforms designed to influence the masses into giving more attention to the political battle against imperialism.

The national goal was the basis for all the action that took place during this phase. The Revolution took certain concrete steps: it solved the problem of the Sudan which had always been an obstacle in the way of Anglo-Egyptian negotiations. It did so by offering a solution which was the beginning of a series of realistic steps designed first and foremost to solve the national question.

The negotiations with the British encountered difficulties, since the leaders of the Revolution were opposed to the principle of joint defence pacts and insisted on genuine independence. To express their intention to carry out their national aims and to exert pressure at the negotiating table the leaders of the Revolution organized armed guerilla action in the occupation zones.

During this period the government was exercising its legislative authority on behalf of the people. It started by striking at the political forces siding with imperialism. A few days after the Revolution laws were enacted abolishing ranks and titles (August 1952), introducing Land Reform (September 1952), setting up the Ghadr Courts (January 1953) and the Revolutionary Court, etc.

These laws aimed at undermining the political and social influence of a certain class, namely the big landlords who were at the same time the traditional politicians. The Revolution deprived the class of all its weapons—the land, the political parties and its prestige. It put them on trial and found them guilty of corruption, graft and squandering the people's wealth. This was a public condemnation of an entire class.

The Land Reform Law had, perhaps, affected the people and at the same time the destinies of the Revolution more than anything else. It liberated the peasants and transformed them into a political power on the side of the Revolution. It also liberated them economically and made them consumers in possession of purchasing power.

Indeed from the first day it was promulgated, the law presented a definite position. Agrarian Reform Laws in other countries had been used as a democratic weapon against feudalism. The weapon might have been a bourgeois one in the struggle against feudalism. In Egypt, however, where land ownership had always been a symbol of royalty, of power and control, the big landlords were also industrial tycoons. In fact, many shareholders used part of their profits to purchase land that would bring them both extra profit and power. Thus the groups were affected by the Agrarian Reform Law were, in one way or another, capitalists and investors. Abboud, Serag Ed-Din, Khashaba, Abdel-Maksoud Ahmed and Al-Shamsi were both big landlords and capitalists. This may explain the attitude of the industrial capitalists to the revolution and its achievements, even such steps as would encourage industry.

Industrialization was part of the independence struggle.

Hence the Revolution took steps towards strengthening and protecting existing industries and building new branches. In this respect a number of laws followed: higher customs duties on articles made abroad, coupled with a decrease in the duty for means of production, engineering equipment and other industrial requirements. It also encouraged the direction of savings towards industrial investment, and the exemption of new companies from taxation for seven years (Law No. 43, 1953) as well as a five-year exemption for new investments in industry.

To encourage the small saver to participate in the industrial development, shares were floated at £2 instead of £4.

All these measures aimed at strengthening the national economy so that it could survive the battle of independence. It is clear that these were traditional measures, within the old economic framework, which aimed simply at reviving the economy of the country. The main goal at the time was development, and to encourage private capital to take

part in it. A number of laws facilitating the import of foreign capital were passed in this period.

This, however, did not mean that the leaders of the Revolution believed in the capitalist pattern. One can say that the policy was two-pronged: to encourage national capital and at the same time to deprive it of political control.

The National Production Council was the first step taken by the government to organize production. Its efforts, however, were at first devoted to a study of plans and the preparation of research and study necessary for the development of private investment. The Council also worked out the first four-year-plan for government investment, which could be regarded as the basis of future planning.

State intervention came again when a law was issued setting an age limit of sixty for board members. This meant the exclusion of the traditional members to be replaced by more revolutionary ones.

Another law stipulated that no person could be a board member of more than six companies, then another law restricted remuneration of board members to 10 per cent of total profits, after the distribution of 5 per cent to shareholders.

The Revolution went beyond the mere organization of companies to take some measures of a social significance. These measures undoubtedly reflected the feelings and aspirations of the revolutionary leaders, although not yet formulated in a definite programme.

In August 1952, a law was promulgated increasing gradual taxation on high incomes. Then came another law introducing gradual taxation on legacies. In contrast a law was issued exempting small holders from taxation.

Although these laws reflected the belief of the Revolution in social reform, they were all confined within the framework of the old society, preserving its essence.

This was reflected in political action. The leaders of the Revolution felt the need to come out into the sphere of mass action. Under pressure of a rapid succession of events—dissolution of political parties, conflict with certain traditional political leaders and the declaration of a state of emergency—and in the absence of a clear line of social and political action the Liberation Rally was formed. Its national aims and programme were devoid of any fixed social content. The slogan “We are all in the Liberation Rally” reflected a real desire to unite in one organization all forces of the nation regardless of their contradictions.

The Liberation Rally was not a revolutionary party. It was simply the realignment of all the existing forces regardless of their contradictions and problems. Although the traditional leadership was excluded

from the Rally, many members of the old parties joined it. Many of the middle bourgeoisie—traders, businessmen, rich peasants, a part of the intellectuals who had no opportunity in the old parties—joined in the hope that they would have a chance in the Liberation Rally.

The failure to transform the Rally into a real party of the Revolution was, in itself, a manifestation of the absence of a clear intellectual line for political action. This may also explain the concentration on legislative and executive measures.

In fact the Liberation Rally was not able to strike root among the masses. When the tripartite aggression took place the Rally doomed itself to extinction when it failed to lead the masses against the invaders. Thus the initiative from below took the new form of committees for popular resistance.

During that period the Revolution was able to achieve a number of things which acted as landmarks for the next phase: the concentrated attack against the Baghdad Pact and imperialist pacts in general, Egypt's important role at Bandung, the Soviet arms deal which broke the imperialist monopoly of arms and dispelled the myth of a Soviet threat, and, of course, recognition of People's China.

Second Phase:

This phase began with the publication of the January 1956 Constitution which, in my opinion, was an effort to evolve a programme for the Revolution and to crystallize it into definite concepts. Among other things it stressed that:

—social solidarity is the basis of the Egyptian society;

—national economy should be organized in accordance with plans which safeguard social justice and aim at expanding production and raising the standard of living;

—capital to be used on behalf of the national economy and should not clash in its use with the public interest;

—the Law guarantees co-operation in the sphere of public economic activities and promotes business activities.

—the state shall supervise the organization of insurance.

When the imperialists tried to delay the development plan by their refusal to finance the High Dam, the effective reply came which was a true expression of the revolutionary leadership's determination to carry out the plan. The nationalization of the Suez Canal Company was the first blow against foreign monopolies not only in the Middle East but in newly independent countries. Although the nationalization was the result of a political reaction, yet it became, internally, a policy which aimed at abolishing the economic positions of imperialism, especially British and French.

The revolutionary wave which resulted from the nationalization swept the Arab world and opened the doors for all Arab revolutionaries to rally around President Nasser who became the leader of the Arab revolutionary struggle against imperialism.

The battle for national independence provided a base for the public sector. The state controlled the banks, insurance companies, British and French economic institutions. If imperialism used its control over banks and insurance companies as a means to control the national economy, the 'Egyptianization' of these institutions enabled the government to exercise full control over the entire economic machinery.

Following the aggression Egypt felt that to ensure the carrying through of its internal policy it had to stand up to imperialist influence in the Arab East as a whole. It thus began to exercise an effective role in inter-Arab relationships and the question of Arab unity began to assume an important place in our policy. This, while it had many advantages, left a certain imprint on the social content of the Revolution at a time when it lacked complete clarity. It pushed Egypt into taking more moderate ways in dealing with questions of social evolution in order not to widen the gap between the different social systems in the Arab countries.

In short, one can say that the need for Arab unity among systems that were socially unequal was imposing itself on thought, tendencies and politics, foreign and domestic alike. It was reflected also in the repeated talk about the need to unite the ranks, and to forget the contradictions, the hatred and the past. These ideas were echoed in the formation of the National Union which decided to exclude the extreme right and the extreme left. It had to unite all other forces under slogans denouncing class struggle and class hatred.

On July 22nd, 1959, President Nasser formulated the policy thus:

The National Union is the means through which we can realize a socialist, democratic, co-operative society, and by which we can protect our goals in establishing this society. We can also achieve our development without a civil war, without killing, not by class war, but by love and brotherhood.

This line of thought was also reflected in the economic field. The state, having increased its potential and control, urged private capital to partake in the development. It sought to control the direction of investment, and to submit private capital to the requirements of the general plan, without hindering its development.

President Nasser laid down the principle of these relations on a definite basis. In the same speech on July 22nd, 1959, he announced:

Under our socialist and co-operative system we regard the state as a patron of everything, private as well as public ownership. The state is responsible

for the protection of the individual against anyone who wants to exploit him. The state is responsible for protection against economic and social exploitation. I believe that we should give freedom to private capital, at the same time balancing it with public capital which is the state sector, thus preventing it from exercising any control over the government. I must protect the consumer, and at the same time find income for the owner of capital.

This phase saw the emergence of the public sector in the sphere of investment, and the establishment in January 1957 of the Economic Organization as state agency for directing all Government investment, and for drawing up new plans. It also acted as its agent for the enforcement of a development plan on private enterprise. A Planning Committee was entrusted with the task of drawing up a long-term development plan and of mobilizing all private and public effort for the realization of a serious and comprehensive plan for raising the country's economic power.

Industrialization was still a slogan. The state expressed its interest in it in many ways, in political speeches and in legislation. But the best expression of this interest was participation by the state in the plan to the extent of 61 per cent of the budget, as well as its concentrated attention on heavy industry, leaving light industry to the private sector or other companies.

CAPITALIST OPPOSITION

Yet private capital was still reluctant to participate. This reluctance threatened the development plan, and impelled the government to exercise more intervention in industry and to strengthen its hold on it. Legislation was enacted aimed against private capital, blocking its way and keeping it within the framework of the industrialization plan. New legislation was issued to hinder its mad rush to transform its savings into property and building. But all was in vain. In the face of this the government had to resort to drastic measures. The research undertaken by the Planning Committee on the resources available for development proved that family savings did not exceed 10-15 per cent of all savings. The government tried hard to get the private sector to invest its profits to help the development plan, but with no appreciable results. At long last and after a great deal of persuasion, the government had to issue in 1959 a law putting a ceiling for profits which prohibited distribution of any profits over 10 per cent of the 1958 profits.

The truth is that the capitalists regarded the plan for doubling income over ten years as too ambitious and exaggerated. They also believed that should it be carried out it would be at the expense of their non-

distributed profits. This is why they resisted the law, and voiced their doubts about the success of the plan, insisting on non-participation. Moreover, they began to wage a war against the plan and against what they called 'sacrificing this generation for the future generation'.

At that time revolutionary thinking was at the cross-roads. The capitalists availed themselves of this opportunity to turn the Revolution away from its course and used the political situation to create an economic atmosphere more favourable for them.

But the revolutionary leaders took a decisive stand which came to be a basic landmark on the future road of the Revolution. They refused to give in to the pressure of the capitalists, and instead took vigorous action against those who opposed the development plan. By this time an agreement was reached with the Soviet Union for financing the second stage of the High Dam. This was followed by a blow against the capitalist positions, indeed against all capitalist tendencies, ideas and values, namely, the nationalization of the Misr Bank, the National Bank and the press.

Thus the real course of the Revolution was charted in no uncertain terms.

As a result capital became more reluctant to take part in the development plan. This necessitated more control, until gradually the development plan was transformed from a mere national struggle into a battle with a social content; its features were clearly drawn in the July 1961 socialist measures.

Both the organizational work and the political thinking moved side by side with economic development. The National Union began its work to unite the ranks of the people in order to guarantee the success of the development plan. The President explained this in his speech in Beni Suef on November 14th, 1958:

The National Union is a Union which groups all forces, the sons of one Arab nation, no deviation towards the right or the left, no division or haggling between us.

The main aim of this phase was to establish a political organization which would include all moderates in Egypt and in the Arab world. The slogan of co-operative, democratic socialism was raised and for a certain time the state put much emphasis on the idea of co-operation. In an interview with Karanjia, an Indian journalist, on July 17th, 1959, Nasser said:

We intend to make co-operative agrarian societies the basis of democracy on which the National Union depends.

Co-operative conferences followed in succession, receiving every

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possible help from the state and from President Nasser personally.

True, by that time the concept of socialism was still not clear, not in the sense of control by the people of the main means of production. But it was gradually emerging along with the growing need to make the plan a success, and in view of the reluctance of the capitalists to participate in it.

The government realized that, given half a chance, the capitalist class would certainly reap big profits. In the official development plan the estimate of the national income in 1959 was £E1,282 million, £E570 million in salaries and wages, that is 44 per cent, while the returns from property ownership (profit, interest, rent) were to be 56 per cent, that is £E712 million. Wages here are the aggregate of wages for workers and employees in all sectors including cash payments, insurance, savings, overtime and social services.

The development plan aimed at increasing the national income by 1964-1965 to £E1,795 million with 42 per cent (£E759 million) in wages and 58 per cent (£E1,036 million) in returns from property ownership.

Official statistics show that in the domain of agricultural ownership between 1952-1957, individual ownership above 20 acres increased by 162,000 acres, that is 10 per cent of their previous ownership.

This development constituted a real danger to the course of the Revolution, especially since the rich, whether they were in the agricultural or industrial sectors, continued to boycott the plan. In this way the Revolution was forced to take some concrete and decisive steps to define the inevitable course as well as its form and content.

CLASS STRUGGLE

A search for a well-defined course began in an atmosphere of class struggle. As time went on experience of both the successes and the failures was accumulating among the leaders and the people. The urgent need arose for a sober study which would lead to the elaboration of definite theoretical concepts.

It was only natural that capitalists and intellectuals with capitalist tendencies should try to impose certain theoretical concepts coinciding with their way of thinking. While the Revolution refused to yield to their influence, it was, at the same time, aware of the mass pressure and of the genuine need to work out a theoretical programme which would lay down clear principles for the political, economic and social development. What was needed was a theory which would confirm the path chosen by the Revolution.

The advanced intellectuals were asked to evolve such concepts, and all through that period a search continued for a theory. But the com-

position of the National Union and the separation between the Revolution on the one hand and the moderate intellectuals on the other, together with the rigid isolation forced on the Left, made it impossible to arrive at a theoretical platform which would meet both the hopes of the leaders and the desires of the masses.

Under these circumstances President Nasser had to undertake this responsibility. Being in close contact with the objective development of the Revolution, and thanks to his non-aligned contact with international experience and constant changes in socialist thought and programmes, Nasser was able to enunciate a number of definite theoretical formulations.

It was impossible to realize the development plan without an almost complete control of capital investments in the state sector. There was no other way save nationalization and the imposition of people's control, bringing in the working masses to take part in the process of construction.

Thus President Nasser became convinced both from the practical and theoretical points of view that it was not possible to follow the capitalist path, and that the development plan could be carried out only through a socialist solution. He announced to the people that the socialist solution of the problem was inevitable, defining in this way the content of his theoretical views and the political and economic activity that this implied.

The monopolization by the Revolution leaders of political activity and the systematic and continual blows directed against private ownership helped to weaken all forces opposed to socialism. President Nasser stressed in the Charter of National Action that class struggle is inevitable and cannot be ignored; the peaceful solution of this struggle cannot be guaranteed unless the reactionaries—the alliance of capital and feudalism—are deprived of their economic and political weapons.

Thus the July socialist laws came into being.

Third Phase:

Thus the Revolution passed through an important phase by realizing and establishing genuine independence and beginning the process of economic development and agrarian reform. It was able to build up a situation which accepted scientific socialism as a programme of thought and economic and political action.

The nationalization of most if not all industrial and commercial institutions and public enterprises and the successive sequestrations of big properties were a real development of the political content of the Revolution.

If the social content of the Revolution developed by successive stages, these decisive economic measures were a qualitative change which determined firmly and clearly the consistent further development of the Revolution. Thus the features of the third phase emerged.

The Revolution is advancing towards socialism, and is now presenting a theory which is both conscious and committed to the scientific socialist programme. It frankly declares its hostility to the capitalist way of development, both it and exploiting capital are condemned in the Charter. This was followed by isolating a number of elements by subjecting them to measures of nationalization and sequestration. The 'isolation' laws were issued and there was a sort of cleansing process in the field of political activity. Some people who in the previous phase held important positions and made use of the available opportunities for influencing the political life of the country were eclipsed.

Now the class struggle became crystallized. The enemy camp was clearly defined, and was joined by a number of people who went along with the Revolution in the hope that by so doing they could halt its progress. It was also joined by conservative elements who thought that the socialist slogans were simply designed for 'the consumers', and that they signified nothing more than formal changes in the existing facade.

It was essential at this stage that the Revolution should activate the camp of its friends. It proclaimed itself as representing the masses of workers, peasants and all working people. It was inevitable, too, that socialism be translated into concrete gains for the workers. A series of measures followed: 25 per cent of profit for workers to bring about a balance in the distribution of income between wages and returns on property. The workers became eligible for board membership and a 50 per cent representation is guaranteed for workers and peasants in all popular councils and parliament. The basis of local government is laid down as a form of democratic rule. A minimum wage was also fixed, and so on.

In agriculture the second Agrarian Reform Law emerged, realizing yet another revolution which led the masses of workers and peasants to have confidence in socialism and to try to protect the gains of the Revolution. More measures were taken: enterprises which the private sector shared with the state now became the property of the state; the capitalists who escaped nationalization in 1961 became subject to nationalization and sequestration.

In 1963 a maximum of £E15,000 was fixed for compensation payable to shareholders, thus putting a limit to the possibilities of enrichment.

This new situation offered a glowing picture, and socialism became

the test to prove who are the enemies of the Revolution and who are its friends.

All this is reflected in the Charter, which defines the features and aims of the Revolution and gives it its scientific theory. The Charter was formulated scientifically on the basis of an objective analysis of the Arab reality, its revolutionary potential and its ability to launch the battle for national reconstruction.

The Charter, moreover, is not an immutable formula. It recognizes the inevitability of change, of its being changed as a political document and a programme of action, if the objective circumstances of the Revolution dictate such a change. The Charter fixes 1970 as a date for the resumption of a discussion to evolve a new formula which would suit the circumstances.

SOCIALISM THE ONLY WAY

One of the most effective passages in the Charter underlines that:

the socialist solution of economic and social underdevelopment in Egypt and the revolutionary approach to progress was not a hypothesis based on free choice; the socialist solution was a historic inevitability imposed by reality and by the hopes of the masses as well as the changing nature of the world in the second half of the twentieth century.

It also confirms that scientific socialism is the suitable formula for the correct programme of progress.

Thus there was a comprehensive change in values; the rich were trying to denounce their prosperity and to be regarded as workers and peasants. Many workers and peasants were able to reach important posts in the Socialist Union. At the same time the isolation of all those affected by the socialist measures meant isolation of a class nature.

Following this came the release of the political Left from camps and prisons and an effort to absorb them in the Revolution. While the work on the development plan experienced great difficulties, it was accompanied by one of the greatest rates of development in newly independent countries—which average 6 per cent to 7.1 per cent of the annual national income.

Many industrial and agricultural enterprises were established, and state investment reached 94 per cent of the total. The first stage of the High Dam was completed.

In the midst of this the elections to the General Assembly were held. The rich and representatives of the exploiting classes began to play up to the workers and the peasants. That in itself was symptomatic of the basic change in outlook which resulted from the July 1961 measures.

The nature of the gradual and peaceful advance of the Revolution caused many slogans to change at one or another stage, including the slogan calling for 50 per cent representation of workers and peasants in the National Assembly. Slogans come up and are hailed by both friends and enemies, but some try to make use of these slogans to suit their own purposes, regarding them as simply a placard without application. Despite these errors, the slogans manage to dig deep and establish themselves in the masses, until eventually they become a reality. This is exactly what happened with the slogan of 'socialism'. For many years the leadership of the Revolution raised this slogan. For many years the rich elements in society tolerated it in the hope that they would be able to bring it down to a mere placard without content. But gradually the slogan took root among the masses until its application became inevitable. Socialism has now become a cause in which the masses believe and which they are ready to defend.

As regards the slogan of 50 per cent worker-peasant representation in the National Assembly, the definition which put directors of even big companies in the category of worker and the owner of up to twenty-five acres (this is a relatively big area in Egypt, especially in view of the rising prices of agricultural produce) in the category of peasant allowed seats intended for workers and peasants to go to the middle groups. Moreover, if one bears in mind that the remaining 50 per cent of the seats in the National Assembly are meant for the middle groups, it becomes clear that the class composition of the legislature has changed in favour of the latter.

It was not the National Assembly alone which suffered from this composition. Lower and medium-level organizations of the Socialist Union also suffered, since the elections brought to them representatives of the very same middle groups—the heads of enterprises and of institutions forming basic units of the Socialist Union, traders and professional people. In the villages some old elements managed to infiltrate into important posts. Nobody can be held responsible for this.

Any class can lose its economic influence as a result of a quick blow. Its social weight and its relations persist for a longer time, until it is replaced by another class. Carrying this out through elections is not an easy thing, nor can it be achieved overnight, especially in the countryside where family ties and influence are still strong.

WORKERS AND PEASANTS

The other thing to be taken into consideration is that the main enemy had already been hit with the complete exclusion of feudalists and big

capitalists from the field of political action. When we talk about the existence of a middle class such as rich peasants, top-ranking employees, medium and rich traders, this does not at all mean that we object to them. We merely underscore the importance of modifying the class structure of our mass and legislative machinery not by excluding these elements, but by giving the workers and the peasants more weight. The process of winning the middle class to the side of the socialist Revolution will require both time and energy.

At the same time we must distinguish between those productive middle groups which play a positive role in increasing production, such as those practising agriculture, and parasites who play no part in the production process while they accumulate wealth by sponging on the public sector and through black marketeering and evasion of the laws.

The difference between the two is not simply moral, it is the difference which distinguishes between the producer elements which must be encouraged and the parasites who must be rooted out.

One important thing should be borne in mind, namely, that the representatives of the middle groups are not alone in the mass or legislative bodies; there have been gains for peasants and workers who have advanced some excellent people to important places, thus laying the basis for the realization of the slogan of socialism. At the same time they were able to present a unique example to the Arab and Middle East countries where the peasants and workers have not yet reached such positions in society.

In any case the setting up of the National Assembly and other institutions of the Socialist Union, together with the constitutional stability which followed the establishment of the Assembly and its legislative power and control, demand that the government should not lose sight of the class structure of the Assembly and institutions of the Socialist Union.

A similar situation has arisen in the economic sphere. While the state has given the workers and peasants impressive gains through the years of the first plan (higher wages, guaranteed employment, social insurance, pensions, free medical treatment, a minimum wage, etc.), the part played by the middle class necessitated granting them some gains as well. It also compelled the state to reduce to the minimum the losses the middle sections incurred as a result of the execution of the plan. In this way the plan became something that guaranteed a succession of gains, and a steady increase in incomes and standard of living. This changed almost completely the conditions of the middle class, and increased their ambitions and requirements. It was inevitable that all this should find expression also in the sphere of ideology.

Some of the middle groups made use of the inability of the public sector sometimes to meet their requirements or to find the needed specialists or managers. This led to the emergence of new social groups—contractors, suppliers, etc. These groups were able to gain social weight as a result of their growing wealth. They are trying to create difficulties in the public sector and to turn it, through bribery, into a source for their own profit alone. When we add to this the rising prices of agricultural products generally, we realize that conditions are ripe for the emergence of excessively rich groups in both town and country.

True, the accumulation of wealth does not constitute any direct threat to socialism, since the laws are there to stop the transformation of any cash accumulation into capitalist accumulation to be used for building private enterprises and therefore for capitalist exploitation.

Yet these rich groups, whose wealth is continuously growing, have actually begun to resist the building of socialism. The richer they become the more violent will be their hostility to socialism.

ANTI-COMMUNISM

This has led to the sharpening of the class struggle. The old reactionaries pluck up courage and together with the new class of the wealthy form a united front opposed to progress. In their struggle they make use of various slogans, such as anti-communism, accusing any left tendency of communism. They also try to describe any forward movement as a transgression of 'Arab Socialism'.

But the picture is not so dark.

First, it should be noticed that no-one has dared or will ever dare to belittle socialism as a slogan and as a belief accepted by the people. Thus, the intrigues of these groups will be carried out within the framework of the principles of socialism; they dare not attack it directly. Socialism has now become a national cause for Egypt, the citadel of its national independence. Secondly, our economy is characterized by a basic advantage which gives it the ability to survive and rid itself of all parasites. This advantage is that it has once and for all got rid of all foreign control.

Even more important is the fact that the leadership of the Revolution is in reliable hands. It has won the love and respect of the people as well as the ability to direct the decisive blow at the right time.

The leadership is working hard to create a capable machinery for the right solution of urgent problems. It is working to create a political organization, a party machinery, more integrated, more flexible and

understanding the problems of the people, studying them and finding the right solutions.

In fact the formation of a political organization of this kind has become an urgent question. The Socialist Union with its six million members is not yet a party machine in the true sense of the word. The need is felt for a narrow political machinery that would encompass well-trained and cultured cadres, capable of rallying and leading the people and comprehending their problems.

Fulfilment of the second five-year plan requires the enthusiasm of the people and their deep conviction of the need for sacrifice.

It has been proved that the law alone is not enough to protect the public sector from parasites and corrupt elements. The law alone can never put an end to the black market. The answer is an effective popular control.

The political organization is capable of solving the task of rallying the people to fulfil the plan and to abolish the corrupt and parasitic elements. If one of our main problems is the shortage of technical and administrative cadres loyal to socialism, the political organization is capable of giving the Revolution technical cadres of the required standard drawn from among the people.

The political organization is, therefore, one of the most important questions facing the Revolution. Its solution will, no doubt, enable us to make the next step towards getting rid of all obstacles in the way of the Revolution.

FUTURE TASKS

Such a step can take the following directions:

(1) To take revolutionary measures needed to stem the rush of the parasites to enrich themselves at the expense of the people or the public sector. To close all the loopholes which allow for such accumulation, at the same time directing certain measures against groups such as contractors and wholesale traders. No doubt, these measures will not be directed only against one group alone; they will extend to other groups hostile to the Revolution, and these will again be compelled to withdraw from the arena of public life.

These measures will also awaken the revolutionary spirit of the people, and rally them for the defence of the Revolution.

(2) To work for the consolidation of the unity of the socialist forces, in the ranks of the political organization and to make the class structure of this organization lean more towards the workers and peasants and the revolutionary intellectuals.

(3) To raise the level of ideological work and information with a view to eradicating old concepts and developing new values.

(4) To shake up anew the machinery of State, with the aim of excluding from important posts all elements hostile to socialism.

(5) To cut prices of some essential goods and thus ease the burden on the masses.

(6) If the gap between incomes is widening, then the slogan of eradicating class distinctions should resound with redoubled force, and the battle for its implementation should be fought on both the intellectual and practical levels.

(7) To unite all the revolutionary Arab forces in a single front capable of facing up to imperialism and home reaction and of forming the beginning of a new revolutionary wave that will sweep Africa, Asia and Latin America.

In this way the Egyptian Revolution can clear its path in the face of any local or international obstacles, thus expressing the will and hopes of our people, as well as all Arab and African peoples. The Egyptian Revolution is not Egypt's alone. It belongs to humanity, which looks upon the unique experiment of Egypt with faith and respect.

Nor does it belong to this generation alone. It is the sum total of dreams and hopes of all past revolutionaries and those of the future. It is a heritage not only of the Egyptian people, but of all the peoples who have won the battle for independence and are looking for a new path.

In this light we can define our responsibility for decisive action to protect and advance this Revolution. The protection of the Egyptian Revolution and its advance towards socialism is the task of all progressives in Egypt and in the Arab world. It is indeed the task of all progressive and revolutionary forces throughout the world.

Postscript:

After this article was written, on May 6th, an agent of a feudal family, in the village of Kamshish, shot and killed a member of the Socialist Union, a peasant.

From the very beginning it was clear that this was a politically motivated murder—the purpose being to instil into the peasants fear of the survivals of feudalism and exploiting capitalism.

The murder aroused a wave of national feeling against the survivals of exploitation. The Revolutionary government formed a committee headed by Marshal Abdel Hakim Amer, Vice-President, to abolish all survivals of exploitation in the countryside, economically and politically.

It took over all the lands of the families still evading the socialist laws, removed these families from the countryside and took measures to weaken the political authority of these traditional forces. This will influence, to a great extent, all the other anti-socialist forces and give great support to the socialist forces in their struggle to overcome all hostile elements.

The measures taken by the government in connection with the Kamshish incident will be the beginning of important political transformations, of no less importance than the July 1961 economic decisions, and will consolidate the positions of the socialist revolution in the United Arab Republic in the coming years.