

# Arab East: Problems and Perspectives

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## **Present-Day Stage of the Liberation Movement**

A remarkable new feature of our time is the emergence as an active anti-imperialist force of a large group

of independent Arab states which have proclaimed they are pursuing a socialist-oriented course. Despite the at-

tempts of the US-led international imperialism to use the Israeli aggression to stem the Arab liberation movements and overthrow progressive Arab regimes, the forces of independence, freedom and progress have withstood the onslaught and are constantly growing. Backed by the all-round assistance and support of the Soviet Union and other friendly socialist states, the Arab peoples are building up the moral and material resources to repel the aggressor and are rebuffing imperialism's continuous encroachments.

Such Arab states as Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Algeria, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and some others are successfully combining their struggle against the Israeli aggression and imperialist pressures with progressive internal socio-economic reforms, in the interests of the people at large. This corroborates Lenin's prediction that "in the impending decisive battles in the world revolution, the movement of the majority of the population of the globe, initially directed towards national liberation, will turn against capitalism and imperialism".

The attainment of genuine national sovereignty after World War II was an important landmark of the Arab states' struggle for independence and foreshadowed the imminent collapse of the colonial system as a result of the shift of the world balance of forces in favour of socialism and the national liberation movements of oppressed peoples.

With the political and economic help of the socialist states to back them, the Arab countries which had taken an anti-imperialist position were able to tackle the next fundamental task, to develop their independent national economies. Among the first problems encountered was the need for an agrarian reform to put an end to feudal domination both in the village and in politics and government as well. This was no easy task, considering the archaic social structure that shackled the people's creative genius and the almost universal illiteracy among a population steeped in traditional conservative attitudes, an aftermath of colonial rule.

While the agrarian reforms in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Algeria, and the PDRY failed to completely resolve

the land problem, they made it possible to take the first steps to limit the political influence of the feudal lords and to transform agriculture. In Egypt, for example, some 400,000 hectares of land confiscated from feudal landowners were distributed free among 300,000 peasant families. In Syria 1,200 thousand hectares of land were taken from landowners. In recent years peasant cooperation has been making headway and advanced forms of cooperation are becoming increasingly widespread. In Egypt 4,100 supply and marketing cooperatives with a membership of 1,500,000, own 55 per cent of the arable land. In Syria there are now a number of production cooperatives. More than a third of the arable land in Algeria has been handed over to self-government committees which represent the public sector in agricultural production. The Government of Iraq encourages cooperation among peasants and takes measures to supply cooperatives with seeds and machinery. In the PDRY the agrarian reform carried out in 1968 nationalised all the land belonging to the sultans, emirs and sheikhs. These lands are now being turned over to the peasants.

As a result of these measures the social structure of the rural population in the above countries is constantly changing in favour of the working peasantry, and labour productivity and agricultural output are rising. In Egypt labour productivity in agriculture has increased 20-fold since the introduction of the agrarian reform. Syria's agricultural output registered a growth of 56 per cent in the decade between 1958 and 1968. In Algeria the self-government sector provides 60 per cent of agricultural produce.

The advanced Arab countries have chalked up considerable advances in industrialisation and in developing the government sector in industry. Starting with the nationalisation of industries owned by foreign imperialist monopolies, they went on to place restrictions on the local bourgeoisie, particularly the local business tycoons. In Egypt, since the July 1952 revolution, about a thousand new enterprises have been forming the backbone of the government sector in the economy. However, as these countries have a

heterogeneous economic structure, they preserve the private sector as well, which, under state control, plays a certain role in the economic development of these countries, notably in retail trade, building and the services.

The national oil industries in the progressive Arab countries are becoming an increasingly potent economic factor for limiting the foreign oil monopoly domination of economic and political life there. Last year Algeria scored an important victory over foreign oil monopolies: the Algerian Government now controls 60 per cent of the oil extraction industry. Iraq is due to put into operation its first national oilfield in April. In Syria the entire oil industry is state-controlled. Egypt, too, controls its steadily growing oil industry.

Last year Libya, Iraq, Algeria, Egypt and Syria extracted 320,000,000 tons of crude oil, out of a total of 700,000,000 tons for the Arab world. Since most of this oil is still being extracted by Western monopolies, headed by US oil companies, the progressive Arab countries and the whole Arab world have a powerful "oil level" that could be used to bring pressure to bear on the Western states to promote a just settlement of the Middle East conflict. The Arab peoples are becoming increasingly aware that it is within their power to retaliate for what is being done by the US imperialists who rake in over 2,500 million dollars in annual profits from the exploitation of Arab oil, and use a considerable part of it to give military, financial and economic backing to Israel.

Cooperation with the Soviet Union and other friendly socialist countries has greatly helped the progressive Arab states in building independent national economies. Soviet aid is used to develop industry and to train national personnel—specialists and skilled workers. The Soviet Union is helping to put up 106 industrial and other projects in Egypt, nearly 50 in Syria, 72 in Iraq, more than 80 in Algeria and over 40 in the PDRY. Projects already completed or in the process of construction in the Arab states with Soviet help include the giant Aswan dam on the Nile, the hydropower complex on the Euphrates

(Syria), steel works in Egypt and Algeria, a shipyard in Alexandria, railways, oil pipelines and refineries, power transmission lines, fertilizer plants, irrigation dams, colleges and training centres. The oil and gas institute, built with Soviet help in Algeria, has a student body of 4,500. In Egypt 36 training centres have in the past few years turned out over 50,000 skilled workers.

Soviet arms deliveries and military specialists have enabled many Arab countries to update their armed forces in line with modern requirements in tactical methods and equipment. This has a far-reaching political effect and plays an important role in the struggle of the Arab countries against the Israeli aggression and imperialist intrigues, to consolidate their sovereignty.

In pursuing an anti-imperialist foreign policy course and curbing the exploiting classes at home, progressive Arab leaders encounter fierce opposition from the imperialist and reactionary forces. The Israeli imperialist aggression, the intrigues and plotting against the progressive regimes with the connivance of the remnants of pro-imperialist parties and groups such as the "Moslem Brothers", the dissemination of anti-communist and anti-Soviet views in order to undermine Soviet-Arab friendship and to split the domestic front—these are a few of the methods used by anti-Arab forces in an attempt to impede independence and progress.

The progressive Arab regimes are faced with the urgent task of consolidating all the progressive anti-imperialist forces to resist the dangerous actions of the imperialist aggressors and local reactionaries. Already begun is the process of building and consolidating the ruling vanguard political parties and organisations such as the Arab Socialist Union in Egypt, the Arab Socialist Renaissance Parties in Syria and Iraq, the National Liberation Front in Algeria and the National Front in the PDRY. As anti-imperialist and revolutionary-democratic parties and organisations, they pursue an anti-imperialist policy, an anti-feudal and anti-capitalist course, and seek to create the conditions for the socialist transformation of society.

The mainstay of these policies is the union of the working people, in the first place an alliance between the workers and peasants. There is gradual progress towards having these parties and organisations cooperate with the communists and communist parties, where the latter exist.

Awareness of the importance of rallying all anti-imperialist forces, including communists, in view of the continuing Israeli aggression and imperialist pressures is increasingly evident in important documents adopted by the parties and governments of these countries. A case in point is the joint Soviet-Egyptian communique on the CPSU delegation's visit to Egypt in July 1971 and the visit to the Soviet Union by President A. Sadat in October 1971. The Soviet-Egyptian communique (Oct. 1971) notes that "attempts to disseminate anti-communism and anti-Sovietism have the sole aim of splitting the ranks of Arab revolutionary fighters. These attempts also seek to undermine the solidarity and cooperation between the Arab peoples and their true friends—the countries of the socialist community". That is why, the communique went on to say, "the two sides resolutely condemn anti-communism and anti-Sovietism as detrimental to the liberation aspirations and national interests of the peoples and solely serving the interests of international reactionary forces".

After the visit to the Soviet Union by the party and government delegation of the Iraqi Republic led by Saddam Hussein, Deputy General Secretary of the Regional Leadership of the Arab Socialist Renaissance Party and Vice Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council, the joint Soviet-Iraqi communique stated, among other things, that "the two sides have reso-

lutely condemned the attempts of international imperialism to spread anti-communism and anti-Sovietism for undermining the solidarity between the Arab countries and peoples, and their cooperation with their true friends—the socialist countries".

Soviet-Syrian relations are making good progress, notably at party level, as witnessed by the recently signed plan of inter-party relations between the CPSU and the ASRP for 1972.

The growing unity of the progressive patriotic forces within the Arab countries and the increasing ties of the advanced Arab regimes with the socialist community help them to resist the Israeli aggression and to work towards a just settlement of the Middle East crisis on the basis of the withdrawal of the invading forces from all occupied Arab territories. The Arab world is witnessing a consolidation of the forces of independence and social progress.

Unity is one of the most powerful weapons in the hands of the Arab peoples in their struggle against imperialism. The world progressive public supports every step contributing to greater unity of the Arab anti-imperialist front.

The Arab liberation movement is in the midst of a complex process of mobilising the masses to repel the aggressor and to ensure further economic and social progress. The pledge of the success of this movement and the solution of the national and social problems facing Arab countries is the unity of all the progressive forces in the Arab world and their growing solidarity with the forces of liberation and progress everywhere, above all with the Soviet Union and the countries of the socialist community.