

SAMIR AMIN August 24

Egypt to day ; the challenges for the democratic popular movement

ONE :

Too much is written on Egypt, which is understandable, even when coming from people whose knowledge of the Arab world is limited.

Too many are absorbing the info given by the mainstream western media, which is in that case as well as it is with respect to Venezuela for instance, almost always systematically distorted and even often completely false.

Many are also simplifying the issue , the alternative being : "respect of elections' results - we say in Egypt rightly of so called elections - or support to a military power".

No , the real challenge does not allow that over simplification . The "movement" - a gigantic mass movement- expresses a set of demands : 1) for social justice, 2) for respect of human dignity and rights (ie democracy understood as more than simply elections), 3) respect of national sovereignty and independence. These demands are objectively complementary, progressive, and involve moving away from neo liberal economic and social policies which are at the origin of the disaster, and simultaneously moving away from alignment on the US and their allies (Europe, Israel, the Gulf countries) in international and regional politics. Yet wide segments of the movement understand that only in part, sometimes separating the issues and forgetting this or that one of the programme, that is the least that can be said. The Military high command makes use of that weakness by on the one hand supporting the mass people demand (removing Morsi) and on the other hand giving no power to the movement (keeping it for them). The struggle is on that ground, not on the one as defined by the MB or the Western powers. It is a struggle aiming at compelling the government to implement the 3 demands as formulated above, certainly not demanding the return of the so called elected MB !

TWO :

For those who wish to know what I said, not what I am said to have said by I do not know whom ! , please consult the following list :

1. *Liberal capitalism , crony capitalism and lumpen development* ; Pambazuka 21/11/2012.

I added later to that paper, after the fall of Morsi that the struggle continues between the movement of the people (in order to achieve their 3 targets as defined in the paper) and the government of Hazem Beblawi (august 2013) which simply continues implementing the same neo liberal recipes as all the previous governments of Mubarak and Morsi.

2. *The electoral victory of political Islam in Egypt* ; Pambazuka, 28/6/2012

3. *The People's Spring, the Future of the Arab Revolution* ; book published in 2012 in the Fahamu Book Series ; at least read chapter one.

4. I add the interview given to Beifang (China) on July 15. Title for the Chinese publication : the challenges the Egyptian people faces to day.

Published on my Face Book page and on my Blogspot.

I would appreciate seeing it on the sites of PAMBAZUKA NEWS and on the site of WFA.

5. Arab readers could find more that I wrote, including a volume 2 of *Thawra Misr* (The Egyptian Revolution) under press.

THREE :

I wrote (in French) : « the fall of Morsi must be seen as a victory of the Egyptian people » (being the result of the gigantic mass protest against the rule of the MB). I added : taking advantage of the weaknesses of the popular movement, the High Command of the Army has captured this victory to its own exclusive benefit (see above). I developed that point by a critique of the neo liberal policy of the present government of Beblawi.

How could somebody of good faith conclude : « Samir Amin supports military coups » !! It is simply dishonest.

I wrote also that progress of democracy (including fair and meaningful elections) cannot be achieved if separated from social progress. Pursuing policies which associate « democracy » (reduced to elections) with neo liberal policies (which ineluctably produce social regression) is simply killing the perspective of democracy which loses legitimacy and opens the road to non democratic forces (such as I said MB or Political Hinduism as represented by BJP). Am I wrong ? Are not « elections » in such a frame turned into a farce , even when not a simple fraud ?

Qualifying this position of mine as « Stalinist » is simply using the very common cheap tool to avoid serious analysis of the challenge.

Is my position (struggle for democracy associated with social progress , which requires moving away from neo liberalism) « reactionary » ?

Curious indeed. The progressive attitude would be that of the mainstream media (and behind the leading powers and the donors' agencies) which precisely request the alignment on neo liberal policies. Can we accept that ? i.e. abstain going beyond what the imperialist powers and their agencies allow us ?

FOUR:

The fall of Morsi was the product of the Egyptian people massive revolt against the rule of the MB.

In the short run, yes unfortunately, the alternative may look : either a military dictatorship, or that of the MB. That sad situation is due to the weaknesses of the movement. In spite of its wide support within the nation (probably more than 80%, including millions of previous voters for the MB who regret it, having discovered their real face), the conflicts of views and interests and of leadership within the movement remain to this day unresolved. This is a situation similar to that in Algeria, where the Army defeated the FIS, as well as in Syria to day. Sad. But it simply means that the task of more educated politically segments of the movement is to work hard to have the movement giving to itself a real common programme and strategy. If and when this would be

achieved, then a real alternative – a popular, democratic and anti imperialist front -will also become possible.

In the meantime the High Command has indeed decided to use extreme violence to “eradicate” the MB (shooting with real bullets on their demonstrations). In fact the High Command benefits on that ground from a wide support of the common people. This support is itself facilitated by the strategy of the MB, aiming at hiding their political defeat by turning to the use of violence in order to appear as “victims” of the Military dictatorship. The MB have said – and they do it – that they will create an atmosphere of civil war, and in particular systematically aggress the Copts. They are covering their violent actions with human shields made of 7 to 10 years old girls (whose life is probably of less value than that of boys!) etc. Even defeated the MB can do harm : they are 600 000 organised, of which may be 100 000 equipped with arms and militarily trained.

In spite of all that I (and many share my views among the more educated politically within the movement) do not think that repression is the most efficient way to deal with in politics. The defeat of the MB could be better further secured through serious political campaigns (and that implies liberty for the movement on a wider scale) explaining whom they are. But that would mean denouncing the neo liberal policy pursued by Morsi. And since the government of Beblawi remains in that same frame, a real and complete debate is probably not wished by everybody!