

AN INTERVIEW

by

PRESIDENT ANWAR EL SADAT

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Question : How can Austrian socialism become a model for socialist application in Egypt ?

President : When I visited Austria last year, while I was on my way to meet President Ford in Salzburg, I saw the country and witnessed real prosperity. Later, I had a discussion with Chancellor Kreisky who is applying a special social system. I believe, to a great and significant extent, that we can learn from this experience, this theory and the method of its application. As you know we have, before my coming here, started with three socialist platforms within the Arab Socialist Union, wherein these platforms shall be classified into right, left and centre. To us, Austrian socialism is quite rich because its ultimate aim, without using any verbal slogans, is the people's prosperity. No doubt it means social justice in the first place. Accordingly, I was most interested, ever since my first meeting with Kreisky last year, in your socialist experience, and I had actually sent the ASU First Secretary and many ministers, the Minister of Construction and Rehabilitation for instance where they held intensified talks with Chancellor Kreisky in this connection. I would like to seize this opportunity to become more acquainted with your socialism since

I held extremely constructive talks with the Head of the State regarding nearly all topics, discussing the latest developments in the Arab-Israeli conflict as well as the international stand and bilateral relations.

We also dealt with our theory of socialism. Yesterday, evening, Chancellor Kreisky graciously invited me to dinner and we held very important talks, which focused mainly on the Middle East problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Tomorrow, I shall hold another meeting to tackle bilateral relations and the socialist theory. Moreover, I will visit Kreisky in his office tomorrow morning at 11 o'clock, whilst at 5 a.m.; I shall hold a plenary meeting comprising the two delegations. Then I shall leave Austria Tuesday evening. I have extended my visit one day so as not to cause Kriesky to miss his week-end. Our talks will be conducted on Monday, first in a closed session, then, in a second plenary session to include members of both delegations.

Question : Mr. President, does your socialism mean democratic socialism ?

President : We are, in fact socialists and democrats. As I told you, the three platforms are following one line, namely the democratic socialist line. The right wing might be somehow liberal, the left might be extremist, whereas democratic socialism is the vital basis.

Question : At the end of the trip during which you paid visit to some countries including the Vatican, you said that Europe can possibly become the friend of the Arabs. How did you find these countries, and did you achieve what you expected ?

President : Even more than what I expected.

Question : In what domain ?

President : The political understanding manifested in their

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desire to help us rebuild our country with their modern technology, which is the process we have embarked upon immediately after the war. As I already told you, I have obtained from the countries I visited more than what I expected.

Question : Years ago, you were of the opinion that Europe is more inclined towards Israel. Can you perceive any change in this respect ?

President : This stage is over, particularly after the joint communiqué released by the nine European countries in November 1973. As for Austria, there has always been a complete and permanent understanding on its part.

Question : You speak of the mobilization towards peace. I myself have seen the re-construction operations carried out in Ismailia last week.

President : I spent a whole week in the Canal Zone before coming here and I also visited the cows farm, a joint project with Austria.

Question : Do you think the time is suitable for furthering the mobilization towards peace, especially when you pointed out that the call for the convocation of the Geneva Conference would not be easy before the American elections ?

President : I haven't said so. It was assumed that the Geneva Conference would be convened at the beginning of this year. Yet its convocation is not associated with the circumstances in America, but with the attitude of some of our Arab brothers who at times seem to welcome the idea, while at other times they reject it. As regards the attitude of the two super powers, America, and the Soviet Union, there is not the least disagreement between us and them concerning the holding of the Conference.

Question : Would the Geneva Conference begin its second round without the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organisation as a member ?

President : We will exert our utmost effort so that the PLO would join us. If we fail in this attempt, then the main item on the agenda of the Conference must be the participation of the Palestinians, for when we meet in Geneva, it would only mean a peace conference, a conference for building a lasting peace which can never be achieved without the Palestinians.

Question : Is it possible that the Palestinians take part in the sub-committees as a compromise solution ?

President : This is not at all my proposition, it might be that of others. What I call for is the participation of the Palestinians in Geneva on an equal footing with the other participants.

Question : If this is not possible, will the Conference be convened and the Palestinians' participation becomes its principal item ?

President : Yes, it shall be convened and its first item would be, as I told you, the participation of the Palestinians, for seeking peace without the Palestinians is of no avail, since they, and not Sinai nor the Golan constitute the basic problem.

Question : Do you think that when the PLO succeeds in establishing a state of its own, it can reach an understanding with Israel ?

President : This is what I always have been and still am discussing at present in Europe and everywhere.

For it is not logical nor is it just to demand from the Palestinians-deprived as they are of their elementary human rights —

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also depend on the behaviour of both sides after ending the state of war.

Question : This means after another 20 years ?

President : I can't exactly say, perhaps after 10 days, or five years. On the whole, let us be practical, and admit that there is a state of war which lasted for 27 years. We have to end it first, whereas Israel should honour its commitments according to the resolution No. 242. We can later start a new stage which will take I do not know how long. I do not want to preoccupy myself with this thought for I have numerous problems I need to solve.