

Egypt in the Queue

Al Masry al Youm

By *Khairy Ramadan* 18/3/2008

Why is President Hosni Mubarak keeping Nazif's cabinet in office, although it is the government of crises – bread, gas and diesel, queues, taxes, drowned citizens, and strikes – while it is at the same time a government of ministers of fashion, private businesses, private jets and privatization designed to serve the rich only.

Anyone who sees the queues for bread, the fights that erupt between people over its loaves, then you read and hear about the murders committed over a single loaf, and then watch the ministers and governors talk about the number of loaves for every citizen must feel sorry for himself and for Egypt. We cannot believe that President Mubarak intervened and held meetings to resolve the crisis.

The President lays the responsibility of finding a solution with the ministers and governors. He demanded that they seek the help of the Armed Forces National Services Authority and the Interior Ministry bakeries to feed the Egyptians.

The problem lies in the management, surveillance and accounting. The government's main problem is that it spends millions on commercials aimed at collecting billions from the poor; even projects for the poor are sold to the rich in the name of privatization, to where the poor cannot find an outlet. Meanwhile the government has its eye on the high monetary reserves at the Central Bank, without paying attention to the fact that this money is not being invested. Indeed it has left the people to face swindlers who take their billions under the claim of investments.

People have lost confidence in the government; they have found nothing but sharks and thieves.

The President knows where the crisis lies, and he did not want to see the Egyptian people hungry and jaded in long queues for bread, diesel and salaries. What then is he waiting for to change this government?

Is it because it is the National Democratic Party's government? The party is run by groups that are out of control, although these forces have proved to be a failure, and have resorted to violence and forgery in order to take over the municipalities, as they took over the People's Assembly and the Shura Council. These groups, although young and wealthy, are anti-democratic and adopt a scorched earth policy.

The President is well aware who is responsible for the social schisms, the demonstrations and strikes, the tarnishing of Egypt's image at home and abroad, the country's doctors, engineers and university graduates becoming armed robbers and car thieves; what then is the President waiting for? Dismissing the government alone is not the solution, as there are those in the party who support its members, and if any of these members leave, they will replace him with a similar one.

The solution is to reread the composition of forces inside the ruling party, which adopts the policy of the stick only. The hope lies not in limited changes, as the danger is in the queue that is growing longer and wider, and no one knows where it will stop. Will the President swiftly take the harder but better decision to save this nation, his governance, and what remains of the people's love for him?