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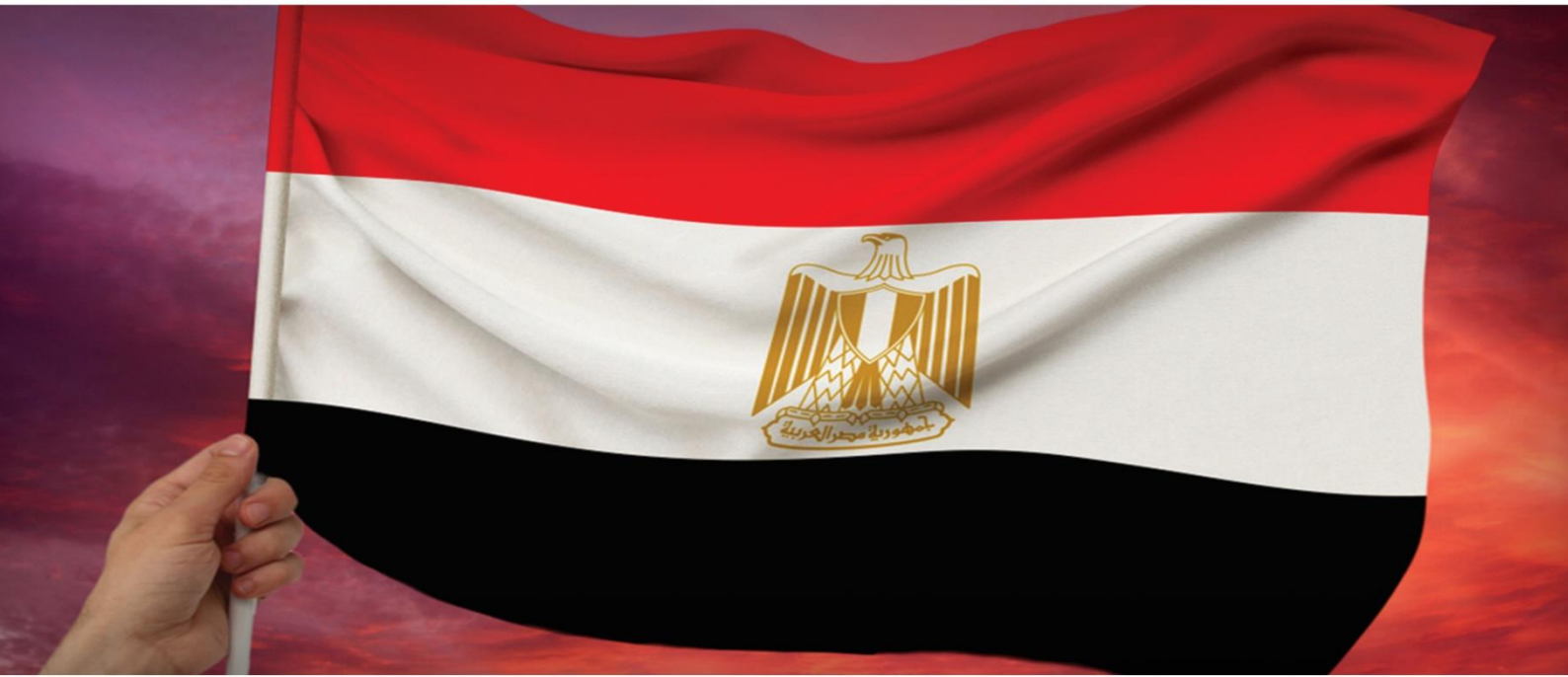
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Egypt: Plunging in Falls of “Fake Patriotism”

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If someone asks you to look at “the fruitful tree”, this may imply that there are other “fruitless trees” nearby; and likewise, if you see a police patrol in Cairo streets with banners of “Egyptian Police” highlighted on vehicles, this may give an impression that there is non-Egyptian police operating in the Egyptian capital, which, of course, is not true.

So why do authorities insist on using two words, i.e. “Egyptian Police”, while one word, “Police”, is enough to convey the intended meaning?

In fact, this strange approach has been adopted by authorities since 2013, and has expanded to include all state agencies and services, where you can see, for example, the “Egyptian army”, the “Egyptian judiciary”, the “Egyptian railways”, the “Egyptian subway”, and so on.

If the use of such phrases were only limited to major installations of ministries and departments, things would have been more acceptable; but it is strange to find soldiers, judges, ticket inspectors, and even dustmen and others having badges with the modifying word “Egyptian” affixed to their uniforms.

Some might argue that generalization of such titles is aimed at instilling the values of patriotism, belonging to the homeland, and national pride in the souls of citizens. However, others believe that such approach is not correct, arguing that values such as patriotism are not instilled in people by repeating or chanting slogans but rather through practices and actions.

To make this proposition clearer, let us just think of the following:

When policemen, for example, do their job for which they are paid perfectly and preserve the security and safety of citizens, people will undoubtedly show respect and pride of them. On the contrary, when policemen fail to care about the security or safety of citizens and even pose a threat to their security and safety, then people will of course fear and even hate them, despite the badge of “Egyptian Police” they are affixing to their uniforms. In fact, such badges in this case will never be able to help instill patriotism and belonging to the homeland in the hearts of citizens; rather they will

be a sign of plain deception. Therefore, a citizen is not supposed to express appreciation of persons that do not deserve it; rather, they cannot be blamed if they feel angry towards such "Egyptian" policemen that do not watch over their security nor guarantee their safety, but with no violation of the freedom and human rights of policemen.

Draining patriotism

Similarly to Don Quixote's victories, the Egyptians have experienced fake victories over the past few years, which reminds people of those fake victories that used to be promoted in the songs of the late famous Egyptian singer Abdel Halim Hafez during the Nasserite era, and likewise the hollow statements that used to be read by the radio broadcaster Ahmed Saeed in the Egyptian Radio's news bulletins at the time, as well as all the enthusiastic speeches delivered in the wrong place and situation.

In this way, the regime's mouthpieces have been promoting that the new enemy has become Turkey instead of Israel, that the national target is to overthrow Libya's UN-backed Government of National Accord rather than to liberate Jerusalem from the Zionist occupation, and that the COVID-19 can be defeated by a 5,000-year-old Egyptian dish called "shalawlaw", and "fava beans", a popular Egyptian dish.

In the same context of fake patriotism, the adjective "national" in the sense of highlighting "patriotism" has been linked with everything related to the existing government and authority, starting from the "national authority" -as if there is another authority in Egypt that is not national- through the State Security Apparatus, that after it had succeeded in suppressing the January revolution, acquired the characteristic of "national" where its name changed into the National Security Apparatus, in addition to the "national army", the "national police", and the "national" institutions, committees, cybersecurity, training, roads, and even the "national" logistic companies, where the adjective "national" has also become a proper name for a series of petrol stations owned by the army, "Wataniyah" the Arabic word for "National".

The flood of fake "patriotism" has overwhelmed everything related to the ruling regime in this "national" era, where the regime that claims patriotism ceded the country's land and wealth to other countries!!

Fake patriotism

This kind of patriotism that is still being promoted by supporters of the ruling regime in Egypt has been highlighted in the form of a school song "Alo Aih Aleina?" (What did they say about us?) to be repeated by pupils; a popular song to be circulated among people such as "Boshret Kheir" or "We're a people and you're another people", addressing dissent; a historical TV serial such as "Kingdoms of Fire" or "The Choice", whose critics are accused of being traitors. Even "patriotism" from the point of view of the regime has been manifested in an arrogant slogan "Long live Egypt-3 times" that is used in the context of hypocrisy. However, instead of instilling real patriotism in the people, these manifestations of fake patriotism have become subject to ridicule and mockery by citizens.

Exactly the opposite

It is strange that in the midst of these sweeping torrents of pseudo-patriotism, one can hardly find any aspects of real patriotism, where:

- Egypt's strategic Red Sea islands of Tiran and Sanafir have been waived or sold, vast areas of exclusive economic zones have been abandoned, and many natural gas fields have been ceded;
- Companies belonging to certain countries (most notably the UAE) almost control the country's economy;
- Egyptian citizenship is being sold as cheap goods, while it is stripped off Egyptian citizens for political purposes;
- Egyptians, especially in Sinai, are displaced and their houses are demolished;
- The Egyptian economy is almost collapsing;
- Egypt's historical rights in Nile waters are threatened;
- Pervasion of corruption, misery, suicide, unemployment, diseases, debts, poverty, oppression, imprisonment, and extra-judicial killing; and absence of freedom of expression and human rights;
- Most young people in Egypt dream of emigrating abroad to fulfill their aspirations and secure their future.

The regime and its dependent opposition at home have plunged the Egyptian society into falls of false patriotism. However, the people's awareness of the reality of this situation was reflected in the Egyptian society in the form of frustration, despair, suicide, deviation and criminality, not patriotism.