

Resistance to the regime of counter-revolution: opportunities and challenges - Statement on the situation in Egypt

Wednesday 8 June 2016, by [Revolutionary Socialists](#) (Date first published: 29 May 2016).

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RESISTANCE TO THE REGIME OF COUNTER-REVOLUTION: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The events of the last six weeks show the complex and contradictory nature of the current period in the long confrontation with the regime of the counter-revolution. The class and political characters of the regime are made very clear whether through its economic policies, the regional role it plays and its dependence on imperialism and zionism.

The regime's policies

The regime adopts extreme neoliberal economic policies, by cutting subsidies, freeing prices, reducing public services and expenditure as well as slashing real wages by devaluing the Egyptian Pound. On the other hand the regime relies entirely on the flood of credit and grants from the Gulf and large industrialised countries. The regime precipitates the country in a circle of perpetual debt to finance large projects and weapons for the army, and this will mean decades of austerity and poverty for workers who will be forced to pay back the debts and interests.

The other aspect of this political and class clarity is related to the regime's regional role: it is a junior partner of Saudi Arabia (as shown by king Salman's latest visit and the unprecedented gift of two islands to Saudi Arabia), and a strategic partner of the Zionists (blockade and siege of the Palestinian people and his resistance) to the extend of announcing its intention to further improve those relations. The other aspect of external policy is the role of the Egyptian regime and army at the service of US and European interests in the region, currently based on the "war on terror" and the interdiction of the refugees crisis. This includes operations in the Sinai desert, the Mediterranean sea and Libya.

Naturally, this combination of internal and external policies leads to the rise of successive waves of public anger, which have for while now gone beyond the Muslim Brotherhood's opposition to the coup, and have begun to cross the obstacles of fear that were created by the bloody repression of any opposition.

The military state and the ruling class use the army, the ministry of Interior and their respective security services as well as the judiciary, the media and the parliament to wage an unprecedented

class, political and ideological offensive against the interests of the immense majority of the Egyptian people. This has caused a number of rifts and changes to the Egyptian political map.

Important transformations

The first of these changes is that the ideological justification for the offensive – confronting the danger of the Muslim Brotherhood – is no longer credible. The Brotherhood is in its weakest state since the 1950s. The repression and security blows on the one hand, their internal faction fights and splits on the other have paralysed the Brotherhood and put it on the backfoot, a situation that is likely to last. Most importantly, this has become obvious to the mass of ordinary people. This means that the Brotherhood ‘scarecrow’ is not what it was two years ago, even to sections like the Coptic middle class.

The second transformation concerns what we may call the “July 30th alliance” : on the one hand, their common enemy – the Brotherhood – has been weakened, and on the other the security forces’ hysterical attacks on any and all forms of opposition and protest, as well as the crude clarity of the regime’s regional and internal class policies, all those elements have thrown a relatively large number of supporters of the coup in the ranks of the opposition. Naturally, this happens with various degrees of hesitations and opportunism, but on the whole there is no doubt that supporting Sisi’s policies has become a lot more difficult today than it was during the decisive moments of 2013.

The third change, also a consequence of the above, is the increasing severity of the rifts and divisions between the various wings and sections of the regime itself. These divisions are mainly between the proponents of the expansion and deepening of the repression, regardless the political, economic and social costs, while others see that the time has come to hold off the offensive and introduce an element of consent, or even a reconciliation for fear of provoking new revolutionary waves, ones that would be stronger, deeper and maybe more violent than all their predecessors.

For us, the most important transformation and certainly linked to the above is the growth of the protest movement. Egypt has seen successive waves of social, democratic and political protests: from the employees’ protests against the national service law, through the popular protests against police brutality, to the doctors’ assemblies and Ultra gatherings, until we finally reached the convergence of political opposition and public protests around the question of the two islands in April 2016.

Our vision

Perhaps the complexity of the current picture, the multiplicity of paths and the depth of the crisis all explain the volatility of the current political situation, and the succession of developments and transformations. The large and promising demonstrations sketching a large front of radical and reformist opposition forces were seen by large numbers as the beginning of a promising political movement, before extensive waves of imprisonment, repression, threats, sentences and fines brought the movement to a halt and swung many from a state of excessive optimism back to square one of frustration and despair.

In this situation, political clarity and having a coherent vision of the state of the political and social movement, as well as the means and prospects of their development are of the utmost importance. In the view of the Revolutionary Socialists, the latest developments prove the following points:

- 1- The Sisi regime is in a state of political, economic and ideological crisis. It is an “emergency” regime, founded on a counter-revolution and incapable of sustaining social and political stability.
- 2- This regime’s reliance on direct repression increases day by day. While the fear of chaos, collapse, terrorism and the Brotherhood did play an important role for the regime’s ideological support in the immediate post-coup period, this cover is quickly unraveling today.
- 3- This means that the regime is losing its popular support, as exposed by its ridiculous attempts at mobilising supporters in April and May, in addition to having lost its previous coup era allies, the reformist parties and movements that have been opposing it for a while now.
- 4- This leads in two opposing directions, the first towards an increased pace of political and social protests, with larger fronts and campaigns, and the second towards the increased severity of the repression and harassment by the state and its terrified security forces.
- 5- This situation will last for a relatively long period. Rising waves of protests will open up possibilities for campaigns and fronts opposed to the regime’s internal and external policies, while the besieged regime will use every means at his disposal to prevent the movement from emulating the one that toppled Mubarak, which evolved from a rising democratic movement to the workers movement and finally the 2011 revolution.
- 6- The radical opposition needs to shape the relevant strategies and tactics for a long series of struggles, maintain the independence of its political formations all the while intervening in a coordinated and effective manner in the various battles with the purpose of developing and deepening the social and political movement against the counter-revolution.
- 7- The radical opposition must avoid excessive optimism and uncalculated political adventures, and move in a realistic and practical manner within fronts in the coming battles. The biggest danger for us would be to believe that the regime is on the verge of downfall or disintegration; the regime is indeed going through a crisis, and there exist real opportunities to build a radical opposition that were not there two years ago, but this remains a ruthless regime that relies on bloody repression, fear and terror. Therefore our war with the regime is a long one, and its battles will not be easy or fast. (as showcased by the struggle for the islands, the regime’s refusal to compromise in the case of the journalists’ struggle as well as the its willingness to arrest and sentence thousands).
- 8- The difficulty of the struggle ahead must not lead us to excessive pessimism or to return to the state of despair and capitulation. The democratic, social and economic movement against the crisis prone counter-revolutionary regime has indeed begun. We will do our utmost to build the largest democratic front to lead the battles in this long, arduous and challenging war.

Revolutionary Socialists , May 29, 2016

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