

Egyptian Revolutionary Socialists campaign for war against Syria

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In recent weeks, Egypt's misnamed Revolutionary Socialists (RS) have stepped up their campaign in support of imperialist war plans against Syria. Since the beginning of March, the RS have published a series of articles denouncing the regime of Syrian president Bashar Al-Assad and criticising the imperialist powers for not launching a military intervention against Syria.

The RS are further attacking China for being complicit in killings in Syria. According to media reports, student members of the RS expelled a representative of the Chinese embassy from a seminar at the University in Alexandria on March 10. They attacked the Chinese representative for his country's support for the Syrian regime, holding up banners reading: "Your country endorses the killing of our Syrian brothers". A picture of the incident has since then been prominently placed on the RS's web site.

China along with Russia vetoed a United Nations Security Council resolution last month that was meant to prepare a Western-backed intervention against Syria.

The principal responsibility for the bloodshed in Syria lies with the US and its allies, not with the Assad regime. By calling for foreign intervention in Syria, the RS are exposing themselves as tools of imperialism, willing to endorse the type of imperialist intervention that devastated Libya, causing 50,000 deaths and installing a far-right Islamist regime in Tripoli.

For nearly a year, the imperialist powers and their allies in Turkey and the Gulf monarchies have been preparing the ground for a military intervention in Syria. The US, France and the UK all declared their support for regime change in Damascus and have armed the so-called Free Syrian Army (FSA) through their proxies in the Gulf. Qatar is smuggling arms into Syria via the pro-US monarchy of Jordan.

In Syria itself, the Western-backed "rebel"

groups—dominated by Sunni Islamists, led by the Muslim Brotherhood and including Al Qaeda-type forces—are conducting a guerrilla war, hoping to topple Assad and install a pro-US regime. A Human Rights Watch report recently accused the US-backed "rebels" of numerous abuses: kidnappings, torture, forced confessions, and summary executions of security personnel and civilians.

As in Libya, imperialism is relying on its pseudo-left allies to hide its crimes. Amid the deepest crisis of capitalism since the 1930s and facing a revolutionary upsurge of the international working class, petty-bourgeois groups such as Egypt's RS, the American International Socialist Organisation (ISO) and the Pabloite New Anti-Capitalist Party in France have been drawn into the camp of counter-revolution.

Opposing social revolution at home, they support imperialist aggression abroad. In propaganda articles, they uncritically present Western-backed armed groups as "revolutionaries" and in some cases criticise the imperialist powers for being too hesitant to launch wars of aggression, while uncritically presenting unverified accounts of civilian casualties due to Syrian government intervention.

The RS recently published a piece by Yusef Khalil and the ISO's Lee Sustar titled "Will Syria's regime crush the revolution?" The article was first published in English on the ISO's web site on March 5 and a few days later in Arabic on the RS web site. This article falsifies the events in Syria, gets caught in its own contradictions, and ultimately critiques imperialism from the right, for not being aggressive enough in launching war with Syria.

The article begins by denouncing the Syrian army's attack on the Baba Amr neighborhood of Homs in early March, when it was held by US-backed "rebel" forces.

It alleges that Syrian troops are carrying out “summary executions,” citing *Al Jazeera* reports and remaining completely silent on US backing for the armed groups that seized Baba Amr.

Based on *Al Jazeera* reports—which show that the Assad regime used heavy artillery against the heavily armed US-backed “rebels”—the ISO and RS make the inflammatory, unproven claim that the Syrian government is “demonstrating its willingness to detain and slaughter all men of fighting age.”

The article moves on: “If Assad thinks he can get away with this, it’s because the opposition remains divided—and the U.S. and the West have so far been wary of undertaking a Libya-style intervention.” It claims that the US is not “a friend of the revolution,” stressing that it “fears that any wider conflict could spill over the border into Lebanon, draw in other powers and pose a threat to neighboring Israel.” It criticises Turkey for not yet having “handed over heavy weapons to the Syrian revolutionary forces.”

One should carefully consider these statements: The RS are attacking the US and its ally, Turkey, for not launching a war against Syria, claiming that it “fears a wider conflict.” In fact, US imperialism is preparing just such a conflict.

It regards its campaign against Syria as part of a general strategy of confrontation with Iran to control the oil-rich and strategically vital Middle East. This strategy is ultimately bound up with broader plans in Washington to maintain the US’s global hegemony, and in particular to use US military strength to combat the increasing economic influence of China. Manifestly, the RS support these measures.

The article further complains, “Assad got a boost when Russia and China vetoed a UN resolution condemning Syria for fear that it would be used as a step toward a Libyan-style intervention.”

That is to say, the Russian and Chinese regimes feared that another bloody, US-led war in the Middle East would further destabilise the region, the world oil markets, and their own strategic interests. It is important, however, to note what the RS chooses to emphasise here. They express no opposition to the idea of another imperialist war—after wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya have claimed millions of lives. Instead, they criticise the regimes in Moscow and Beijing for acting to temporarily slow the drive to war by the US

and its allies.

Organisations like the RS in Egypt and the ISO in the United States represent a layer of the affluent middle classes hostile to the working class and loyal to imperialism.

Their supporters come from a milieu of Western-oriented students, academics and journalists working for Western-backed NGOs or bourgeois media outlets like the British *Guardian*, the Qatari news channel *Al Jazeera* and the Egyptian state-owned daily *Al-Ahram*. Hostile to the revolution in Egypt—where they opposed last year’s calls for a “second revolution” against the US-backed military junta and its Islamist allies in the Muslim Brotherhood—they are openly coming out for Washington’s wars in Syria and beyond.



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