Egyptian pseudo-left parties form new anti-working class alliance

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In Egypt various pseudo-left parties and groups have formed a new alliance, the Democratic Revolutionary Coalition" (DRC). It was officially announced during a press conference at the headquarters of the Egyptian Socialist Party (ESP) in Cairo on September 19.

The coalition includes the ESP, the Socialist Popular Alliance (SPA), the National Progressive Unionist Party (Tagammu'), the Egyptian Communist Party (ECP), the Workers and Peasants Party (formerly Workers Democratic Party), the Socialist Revolutionary Movement (January), the Egyptian Coalition to Fight Corruption, the Mina Daniel Movement, and the Socialist Youth Union.

The formation of the DRC is the latest maneuver by the Egyptian pseudo-left parties in their efforts to tie the Egyptian working class to the bourgeoisie. Its goal is not to lead a struggle for political power and for socialism by the working class—the main force behind the revolutionary struggles that ousted former dictator Hosni Mubarak on February 11 of last year. Rather, it aims to develop closer ties between the Egyptian petty-bourgeois "left" and the operatives of the United Nations and the old Mubarak regime.

At the conference, Workers and Peasants Party (WPP) leader Kamal Khalil said that the DRC aims to unite with the Popular Current, led by former presidential candidate and Nasserist leader Hamdeen Sabahi and the Constitution Party of liberal politician and ex-UN official Mohamed El Baradei. He said, "From now there is no 'I' but 'us,'" adding: "We're going through a dangerous phase that demands the unity of all national forces, and not just the left."

At the founding press conference, the DRC also unveiled a pro-capitalist and purely nationalist program. In order "to build a democratic civil state" and protect Egypt's "national sovereignty," it aims to build "a progressive democratic revolutionary alliance as the foundation for a broad and united national democratic front." That is, as indicated by Khalil, the founders of the DRC intended from the beginning to carry out an alliance with bourgeois forces that do not even attempt to present themselves in "revolutionary" colors.

Last week DRC leader and ESP General Secretary Abdel Ghaffar Shokr announced that the DRC would enter the so-called Egyptian Patriotism Alliance (EPA), established by secular liberal and "left" bourgeois parties as a counterweight to the ruling Islamists. The EPA includes the Wafd, the traditional party of the Egyptian bourgeoisie, the liberal Free Egyptians Party led by multi-billionaire tycoon Naguib Sawiris, the Constitution Party of ex-Mubarak official and Arab League head Amr Moussa, and Hamdeen Sabahi's Popular Current.

The DRC's orientation to right-wing bourgeois parties who openly defend the privileges and wealth of the Egyptian bourgeoisie is bound up with the social outlook of the forces gathered in the coalition. The parties inside the DRC do not represent the interests of the Egyptian workers, but of more affluent sections of the middle class hostile to the working class and to a struggle for socialism.

The most rotten and opportunistic such organization, falsely flying the banner of "revolution" and "socialism," are the misnamed Revolutionary Socialists (RS). They have repeatedly shifted their orientation towards one or another section of the Egyptian bourgeoisie to block an independent struggle of the working class for socialism.

After Mubarak's ouster the RS oriented towards the

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military junta, declaring that Mubarak's generals could be pressured for democratic and social reforms. When workers mounted mass protests against military rule before the parliamentary elections last November, the RS shifted their support towards the Islamists, with whom they have already been collaborating closely under Mubarak. In the presidential elections earlier this year, they campaigned for Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohamed Mursi.

In their campaign statements, they defined the Islamists as a revolutionary force that can be pressured to "complete the objectives of the revolution."

Now as the Egyptian masses come into conflict with the Mursi regime, a section of the RS—the WPP, which includes various RS members, among others Kamal Khalil—is shifting back towards sections of the secular bourgeoisie.

Officially, however, the RS have not yet joined the DRC. Hisham Fouad, a leading member of the RS welcomed the alliance but stressed that "before talking about unity, we have to know on what stances, and with whom. We can't afford another bubble that will quickly burst."

Fouad's comment underlines the opportunistic considerations that drive the policies of the pseudo-left. The RS have no principled opposition to joining another anti-working class coalition; in fact, already last spring they had joined the so-called Socialist Front, a coalition made up of most of the parties which are now gathered in the DRC. However, the front was short-lived, due to sharp internal quarrels.

The layers of the RS that have not followed the RS into the DRC are working to create another such pro-capitalist coalition that they hope will be more stable. In August, Ahmed Ezzat, another leading RS member, told *Ahram Online* that the RS are meeting with Sabahi to discuss a "revolutionary front" to prepare "for the next revolutionary wave."

The maneuvers of the pseudo-left come as renewed strikes and protests in Egypt undermine the Mursi regime. According to a recent report by the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR), in the first half of September alone, some 300 strikes and protests were held among nearly all layers of the Egyptian working class.

Strikes were staged by factory workers and company employees, teachers, government workers, university faculty members and employees, drivers, medical workers, students, entrepreneurs, officers, vendors, tour guides, policemen, fishermen, lawyers, and pharmacists. Currently doctors are on a nationwide strike.

The strikes and protests express increasing opposition amongst the Egyptian masses to the pro-imperialist and anti-working class policies of Mursi and the Brotherhood. On foreign policy the Mursi regime continues to cooperate closely with the imperialist powers and Israel. It is upholding the blockade against the Palestinians in the Gaza strip and the imperialist war drive against Syria to oust the regime of Bashar al-Assad.

Internally, Mursi deals as ruthlessly with protests and strikes as did the Mubarak regime and the military junta before him. Only three weeks ago Mursi's security forces brutally suppressed protests in front of the American embassy at the behest of US President Barack Obama.

Now Mursi is expanding his crackdown against strikes, which were recently described as "treason to the country" by a leading MB figure. Two weeks ago, Alexandria's Court of Misdemeanours sentenced five dockworkers from the Alexandria Container & Cargo Handling Company to three years in jail for inciting a strike.

Last week forces of the Interior Ministry raided the homes of workers at Zagazig University in the Nile Delta town of Zagazig and detained them for participating in a strike.

On Wednesday four microbus workers were arrested after clashes between striking microbus workers and security forces in front of Cairo's traffic police headquarters.

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