

# Revolutionary Socialists offer their services to the Egyptian bourgeoisie

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31 January 2013

There are few things as repugnant as a hypocrite attempting to take the moral high ground. In the case of Egypt's Revolutionary Socialists this spectacle is made all the more abhorrent because it is attempting to hide its past political crimes and conceal a policy that threatens disaster for the working class.

On January 26, the RS issued a statement, "The year the masks fell: Egyptians against the alliance of the Brotherhood, military and capital."

Amid mass protests against the Muslim Brotherhood regime of President Mohamed Mursi and his military backers, the RS divides its statement in two. The first half is dedicated to portraying themselves as opponents of Mursi. The second is an offer of the RS's services to Mursi's bourgeois rivals, organised in the National Salvation Front.

The RS writes that Mursi and the Brotherhood won elections in May because their opponents were "Ahmad Shafiq and the remnants of the old regime" and because of "their deceptive claims of supporting the revolution's goals."

Instead, they write, the Brotherhood has "made an alliance with the military to protect their new positions of power in return for allowing the military to retain its unaccountable economic empire." They have also thrown the country "into the arms of the IMF".

The RS speaks of the MB being exposed and its masks falling away, without mentioning that it was the RS itself that labored to put the masks there in the first place. The RS supported Mursi's election and did so after years of service as the Brotherhood's chief political apologists.

With the eruption of the mass movements against Hosni Mubarak in 2011, the RS came forward as the chief advocate of a united movement of the Islamists and liberal bourgeois parties to block social revolution. In February of that year, for example, they called for all opposition parties to "take all political and national forces into this dialogue" with the Mubarak regime, and for the creation of a "supreme council" that "includes people who are trusted, regardless of their colour in the political spectrum".

In July, after the downfall of Mubarak and with the Egyptian military ruling the country directly, the RS and its pseudo-left allies signed a statement with all major political groups in Egypt, including the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafists, agreeing to leave all "controversial issues" aside in order to wage a common struggle.

When elections were held the next year, the RS came behind the Muslim Brotherhood. On June 2, 2012, it issued a statement declaring "its opposition on principle to the candidate of the Military Council, the dissolved National Democratic Party and the forces of the counter-revolution, Ahmad Shafiq" and its support for Mursi's election in the second round of the presidential election. It complained that Shafiq had been able to get through to the second round because of "the failure of the candidates affiliated with the revolution to unite behind a single candidate clearly expressing the programme of the revolution."

It called upon the Brotherhood to declare its commitment to forming "a presidential coalition which includes Hamdeen Sabbahi [a Nasserist and now a co-leader of the National Salvation Front] and [former Brotherhood leader] Abd-al-Moneim Abu-al-Fotouh as Vice-Presidents" and "the formation of a government across the whole political spectrum".

The same issue of *Socialist Worker* (UK) that published the RS statement declared, "A vote for Mursi is a vote against the legacy of Mubarak and for continuing change."

The RS continued supporting Mursi for months. On June 26 the RS's Hisham Fouad "told *Socialist Worker* that Mursi's victory had dealt the counter-revolution 'a serious blow'." Judith Orr commented that "Mursi's presidency opens up the possibility of the revolution deepening."

On July 10 *Socialist Worker* declared that Mursi "has encouraged expectations that he will deliver for ordinary people. This will be dependent on how much he can mobilise support to stand up to [the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces] Scaf."

On November 24, with opposition to Mursi's government growing, RS leaders Sameh Naguib declared that the RS

would now focus on building alliances with the bourgeois liberals and the Nasserists, while still opposing any “divide between secular and Islamist forces”.

“Our entry into any front or alliance is governed by the strategy of the united front,” Naguib proclaimed.

The RS combined the sounding of notes of caution over the inclusion of ex-regime figures (“feloul”), such as former foreign minister Amr Moussa, with its support for alliances that ended in the formation of the National Salvation Front, led by major bourgeois figures such as Mohamed ElBaradei and Sabbahi, and including parties such as the Wafd and Tagammu that collaborated with Mubarak for decades.

A November 27, 2012 statement was the first to proclaim that “the masks fell from Mohamed Mursi and his Muslim Brotherhood organisation,” only to call for the “formation of a new Constituent Assembly which represents *all sections of society*” [emphasis added].

Calls for a few reforms such as a minimum wage of 1,500 Egyptian pounds a month [£150], “progressive income taxes” and renationalising some companies, were declared as being, “All power and wealth to the people!”

The latest statement by the RS is essentially an elaboration of this same perspective, but with greater stress on the discrediting of the National Salvation Front by its association with the feloul. “The leadership of the National Salvation Front,” the RS writes, “made an error by including remnants of the old regime in its ranks. They are known for their social and political bias against the revolution, and the danger they pose is no less than that of the Brotherhood.”

This is quite an error to make! In reality, their inclusion testifies to the role of the National Salvation Front as an alliance of bourgeois parties opposed to revolution and seeking only a better place for themselves in the state and commercial sectors.

The RS is opposed to the building of an independent revolutionary party for the working class, advocating instead that the “revolutionary youth” “cleanse” the NSF—by which they mean merely ditching a few embarrassing allies. The RS asserts that such a cleansed NSF would be able to “achieve the aims of the revolution of bread, freedom, social justice and human dignity” and “prioritise the social interests of the millions of poor and low-income manual and office workers, peasants, and all those who work for a wage.”

This perspective could be advanced by the most right-wing of social democratic parties. Indeed invocations of “social justice” are the daily bread of Germany’s Social Democratic Party.

The RS says nothing that is not being said by others within the NSF also anxious to reinforce its credibility with the masses. On January 21, *Ahram* headlined an article, “Egypt’s

opposition NSF still haunted by whispers of links to Mubarak regime.” It reports that this “is a charge that has dissuaded a number of would-be sympathisers from cooperating with the NSF,” citing in particular the Strong Egypt Party of former Muslim Brotherhood member Abdel-Moneim Abul-Fotouh.

They also note that last November, student members of three of the NSF’s founding parties, including ElBaredei’s Constitution Party, issued a statement refusing “to see our party leaders stand side-by-side with remnants of the former regime in the NSF.”

While the RS was bemoaning the inclusion of a few “remnants”, the NSF was busy lending support to the crackdown on protesters by Mursi, while haggling over his offer to open up dialogue. On January 27, NSF spokesman Khaled Dawoud welcomed steps by Mursi to restore security in the nation—a declaration of martial law—as “a right move given what is going on, namely thuggery and criminal actions.”

The previous day the NSF had urged Mursi to form a national salvation government with the “efficiency and credibility” necessary to “implement the demands of the revolution.”

The same stance was taken by the Egyptian Popular Current of Hamdeen Sabbahi, which welcomed a national dialogue on condition that “an agenda known to all concerned parties is set, sessions are held publicly, and guarantees are provided for what will be agreed upon.”

Aboul-Fotouh’s Strong Egypt Party called for the formation of a consensual crisis-managing committee including ElBaradei and Hamdeen Sabbahi and Brotherhood leaders—the same demand made by the RS.

The RS’s concerns over the make-up of the NSF did not of course prevent it from signing a joint statement on January 26 urging “freedom, dignity and social justice” together with Sabbahi’s Egyptian Popular Current, ElBaradei’s Constitution Party and others.

Mohamed Abulghar, the leader of the Social Democratic Party, recently said of the NSF, “It is really a miracle that we are still sitting together.” He should properly give thanks to the RS, which has played the key role in opposing any independent action by the Egyptian working class, and in seeking to shackle workers and youth to the bourgeoisie.



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