

Three years of the Egyptian revolution

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On January 25, 2011, mass revolutionary struggles erupted in Egypt against the regime of President Hosni Mubarak. Egyptian workers and youth followed the example of their Tunisian class brothers, who had toppled that country's dictator, Zine El Abedine Ben Ali, eleven days before. They defeated police in street battles on the "Friday of Anger" and, after 18 days of mass strikes and protests, forced Mubarak from office.

The Egyptian Revolution proved the revolutionary capacity of the working class, dealing a powerful blow to those who claimed that the fall of the Soviet Union signified the "end of history" and the final triumph of capitalism. Above all, however, it revealed the crucial task the working class faces in this era of world revolution: the building of its own revolutionary socialist party.

The day before Mubarak's ouster, the *World Socialist Web Site* wrote: "The revolutionary Marxists must counsel workers against all illusions that their democratic aspirations can be achieved under the aegis of bourgeois parties. They must expose ruthlessly the false promises of the political representatives of the capitalist class. They must encourage the creation of independent organs of workers' power which can become, as the political struggle intensifies, the basis for the transfer of power to the working class. They must explain that the realization of the workers' essential democratic demands is inseparable from the implementation of socialist policies..."

"Above all, revolutionary Marxists must raise the political horizons of Egyptian workers beyond the borders of their own country. They must explain that the struggles that are now unfolding in Egypt are inextricably linked to an emerging global process of world socialist revolution, and that the victory of the revolution in Egypt requires not a national, but an international strategy."

The perspective laid out by the WSWS, based on

Leon Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, has been vindicated by the subsequent developments in Egypt. After three years of mass social struggles, the Egyptian bourgeoisie has proven incapable of meeting any of the demands for bread, freedom and social equality that drove the working class to revolution.

It is seeking instead, with the support of its backers in Washington, to restore as much as it can of the old Mubarak regime. Since the July 3, 2013 coup, the junta of Mubarak-era intelligence chief General Abdel Fatah al-Sisi has murdered and jailed thousands, banned the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood (MB), and pushed through a constitution, publicly endorsed by Mubarak himself, enshrining a military dictatorship.

The junta is seeking to stabilize its rule through terror and repression. Today, on the third anniversary of the Egyptian Revolution, 260,000 policemen, 180 battalions, and 500 combat troops will be deployed throughout the country.

Without its own party fighting for a revolutionary perspective and the development of Marxist consciousness, the proletariat was able to topple the head of state and shake the political establishment to its foundations. It was not, however, able to overthrow the Egyptian bourgeois state and lay the basis for achieving its social and democratic aspirations by ending capitalist exploitation and imperialist oppression.

Instead, the unfolding of the revolution brought the working class into conflict with the social and political forces through which the Egyptian capitalist class and its imperialist backers successively sought to stabilize their rule in Egypt. As workers launched one wave of struggles after another, the irreconcilable conflict between the working class on the one side and bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces on the other came to the fore.

Initially, the army sought to continue its rule without Mubarak, installing the Supreme Council of the Armed

Forces (SCAF) junta, pushing through anti-strike and anti-protest laws and cracking down on demonstrations in Tahrir Square.

When the ruling class responded to an upsurge of mass protests against the SCAF by organizing presidential elections that brought the Islamist Mohamed Mursi to power, the MB was exposed as a defender of the same class interests as the hated Mubarak regime. Mursi held talks with the International Monetary Fund to prepare austerity measures against the workers and served as a stooge of US imperialism, supporting Israeli air strikes against Gaza and the escalating US-led proxy war in Syria.

With each stage in the struggle, the liberal and pseudo-left factions of the affluent middle class turned more sharply against the working class as they realized that its aims posed a threat to their own privileges.

When mass protests of tens of millions erupted last summer against the hated Mursi regime, these groups panicked and threw themselves behind the return of a military dictatorship as an alternative to working class revolution. They gave their support to the right-wing Tamarod movement and sought to channel mass anger against Mursi behind it. Meanwhile, Tamarod helped the army organize the July 3 coup. Forces like Hamdeen Sabahi's Popular Current and Mohamed ElBaradei's Constitution Party joined the transitional government established by the military and helped organize mass repression.

The most corrupt group supporting the coup and aiding the forces of counterrevolution was the pseudo-left Revolutionary Socialists (RS). In each phase of the revolution, the RS sought to subordinate the working class to one or another faction of the bourgeoisie. Having initially claimed that the SCAF junta would grant social and democratic reforms, the RS opposed calls for a "second revolution" against the SCAF. Instead, it promoted the MB as "the right wing of the revolution," hailing Mursi's election as "a victory for the revolution." When working class opposition to Mursi mounted, the RS hailed Tamarod as "a road to complete the revolution" and called the coup a "second revolution."

Driven by the fear that the junta's repression will provoke a renewed revolutionary movement of the working class, the RS is shifting even further to the right. It is currently allied with the Islamist Strong

Egypt Party and the April 6 Youth Movement in the so-called Revolutionary Path Front (RPF). The RPF aims to reconcile the feuding factions of the Egyptian ruling elite, warning that, "the victory of either party over the other will mean the defeat of the state."

The tumultuous struggles in Egypt contain enormous lessons, obtained at a bitter price, for the working class in Egypt and throughout the world. The victory of the revolution depends on establishing the political independence of the working class, in opposition to liberal and pseudo-left forces in the middle class who will stop at nothing to block a social revolution.

The revolution cannot triumph over imperialism and Egypt's various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois factions except through the building of a section of the ICFI in Egypt, basing itself on the theory of permanent revolution and fighting for the working class to take power in Egypt and throughout the Middle East.



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