



# Egypt's permanent Revolution

by Meschak Komane

On June 30th an estimated 17 Million people flooded the streets of all bigger cities in Egypt. This was the biggest protest in human history. It was one more important step of the Egyptian Revolution developing since 2011. A working class alternative is needed to make it successful and end the bloodshed.



Demonstration on Tahrir square in Cairo celebrating the end of Morsi's presidency

In January/February 2011 the Egyptian people brought down the hated Mubarak regime. The working class of the Suez Channel and the textile industry played a key role. The occupied Tahrir square became the centre of the revolution. After Mubarak, the military took over and called elections for November 2011.

Despite the good results of left candidates representing the demands of the revolution, Morsi from the Muslim Brotherhood and Shafiq, a candidate associated with the old Mubarak regime went on to the second round of elections. Morsi had 5.6 million votes in the first round and got around 11 million in the second. But that wasn't an expression of support for him but a vote against the hated Shafiq. Morsi promised social reforms but he didn't deliver.

## Undemocratic constitution

With the people tired of revolution and protest the government had time to breath. But their promises weren't delivered while the social crisis continued. Independent unions were founded in all major industries. Workers demanded their share.

In December 2012 the Morsi government wanted to push through its constitution. Seeing the attacks on freedom of speech, womens and other fundamental rights, people took to the streets again. Hundreds of thousands demonstrated on the streets of Cairo

in December 2012.

But they couldn't convince the majority of people to vote it down. They were yearning for stability. Although failing in Cairo the referendum for the constitution got a majority.

## Tamarod = Uprising

It took more months and the deteriorating social situation to bring the majority of the people on it's feet against Morsi. Fuel was scarce. Drivers had to wait up to 7 hours to get fuel. Unemployment rose. The Egyptian Pound lost 20% over the last year. Protest and strikes developed in all parts of the country.

An initiative called "Tamarod" (arabic for uprising), mainly composed of young people and some middle class elements, started a petition, demanding Morsi has to step back before July 2nd. For weeks and months the collection of signatures dominated the streets of Egypt. People had to give their name and ID number. Activists were going from house to house and street to street. At the end of June Tamarod could boldly announce that they had collected 22 million signatures!!!

## Morsi had to go

The same initiative called for protest on June 30. The Tahrir square was occupied again. The whole of Egypt's poor, youth and working class were on their feet. But also middle class and business people joined the protest. Trade

unions were put under pressure from below. A strike of textile workers was called for July 4. Threatened by the movement the military decided to step in and told Morsi that he was no longer the president on date.

The Egyptian Military is not just a state institution. They own large part of the industry. Their output is estimated to make up 8 to 30% of the

countries economy. The military is the biggest capitalist in the country! They saw with suspicion how Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood placed their people in key economic and political positions. The military wants to use the revolution for its own end.

## Split of ruling class and the working class

This is shown in the interim government itself combining politicians in favor of Western imperialism and military officials. The leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood was jailed. Since 2011 different wings of the ruling class have been trying to exploit the revolution in their interest. Neither the Muslim Brotherhood nor the military and western imperialism represents the demands of the movement itself. On the basis of capitalism they are unable to overcome the fundamental social and political crisis in Egypt.

Unfortunately working class people are split themselves. Still a substantial part supports

the Muslim Brotherhood fearing the return of the Mubarak regime (but also for religious reasons). The majority of people who overthrew Morsi has illusions in the military on the other hand. Former left candidates support the interim government. A whole number of violent clashes between both sides occurred after Morsi was ousted.

The working class needs a voice of their own to represent the demands of the revolution. Defending democratic rights, demanding an increase of the minimum wage, fighting unemployment, nationalising the big companies and the banks they can unite with the poor, youth and middle class behind them. Only a break of capitalism and the establishment of a socialist society will bring real democracy to Egypt.

## A new international movement?



Protest in Brazil

This year mass protest broke out in a whole number of countries. In Brazil well over 250.000 people demonstrated against the government in Sao Paulo and other cities. The protest initially started against the increase in transport prices. In preparation for the football world-cup cities are transformed to the disadvantage of working class people like we witnessed in South Africa.

The protest soon grew beyond the demand for a freeze in transport fares. It was generally aimed against the government demanding a change in the living conditions of working class and poor people. Trade unions announced strikes. Highways were occupied. The government had to retreat on the transport price increase and the highway tolls.

## Turkey

Mass protests also broke out in Turkey. The movement against the Erdogan regime started in the Gezi park against a corrupt building project in the inner city of Istanbul. Protest were met with brutal repression. According to the Turkish chamber of doctors five people died and 7478 were injured.

The protest had a strong sense of internationalism. Photos were exchanged on Facebook by activist stating "We are all Sao Paulo!" "We are all Gezi!". Combined with the Egyptian Revolution, the question was posed: What are similarities of these movements? Do we see a new international movement?

The common background of these protest is the capitalist crisis resulting in increasing food prices, poverty and unemployment. All of these movements challenge the rule of corrupt capitalist regimes. But yet they have different origins, methods and no unifying program how to bring down and replace this regimes with governments in the interest of working class people. The DSM is organised in the Committee for a Workers International with sections in over 40 countries aiming to unify and guide these struggles.



Random repression in Turkey