



Cairo conference can unite resistance across the globe

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Revolutionaries and anti-imperialists from across the world will be gathering in Cairo between 3-5 June to discuss the next tasks for the growing rebellions across the Middle East and North Africa, writes **John Bowman**

The international conference has been sponsored by some of the organisations that played a leading role in bringing down Egypt's Mubarak dictatorship.

A statement from the organisers says:

"The conference will discuss a number of key issues including: dilemmas and achievements of the Egyptian and Tunisian revolutions, the future and contradictions of the current wave of Arab revolutions, the relation between the Arab revolution and imperialism and Zionism, Arab revolutions in the general framework of democratic struggles historically and internationally, Arab revolution and the struggle against neo-liberalism and capitalist globalization."

Since 2002, the birth of the 'war on terror', an international anti-war conference has taken place in Cairo every year, attracting socialist and anti-imperialist resistance forces from across the world. But with increasing anger among Egyptian people over Mubarak's support of Israel's attacks on Palestine and the siege of the Gaza strip, the Egyptian government banned the conference in 2009.

This year's conference in early June won't just be a celebration of the gains of the Egyptian revolution though - its new remit is to go far beyond struggles against war, and discuss the prospects for the social transformation of the entire region. And that opportunity, if seized with both hands, could make an historic impact.

Whilst the mass movements, coupled with mass strike action in Egypt and Tunisia overthrew their hated dictatorships they are now facing a backlash from those parts of the state they did not overthrow - namely the police and the army.

Meanwhile in Syria and Libya, the governments are attempting to crush the rebellions with the use of extreme violence and mass killings.

And in Libya and Bahrain, the revolutions were complicated still more by intervention by western imperialists and their Saudi allies. In a shoddy deal the US agreed, in return for support for its bombing of Libya to mute its criticism of the Saudi crushing of democracy protesters in Bahrain.

This is testament to the fact that the democratic revolutions taking place are running into confrontation with the forces of counter-revolution, whether this be violent suppression from the old regimes or from the supposed reform governments in Tunisia and Egypt.

Still more, the working class in Tunisia and Egypt not only launched strikes and threatened general strikes that were the decisive factor in ousting the dictators, but advanced demands for food, pay rises and improved working conditions that are still to be met.

To defeat the violence of the counter-revolution requires a strategy of revolutionary struggle. The realisation of the social and economic demands of the working class, and the urban and rural poor requires a party that can fight in their interests.

It is this discussion that we aim to bring to the June conference, and how we can coordinate our efforts globally.

The same system that has thrown millions into poverty around the world, that props up dictatorships to secure the interests of the west, that has subjected so many people to war and suffering in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Palestine is the same system driving down living standards, attacking and privatising jobs and services in Europe and the USA.

By meeting every year, drawing in trade unionists, women's organisations, socialists, revolutionary youth and progressive social movements across the world, the Cairo conference could even set in motion the building of a new international party to unite the resistance to capitalism and imperialism all across the globe - a revolutionary fifth international.

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