



Egypt: Elections results show sweeping gains for the counterrevolution

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Despite a massive wave of mobilisations in Tahrir Square and other city centres in November and important actions continuing into December, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces is still maintaining its illegitimate rule in Egypt. Though the focus of the popular upsurge was to force the SCAF to withdraw from power and handover to a genuinely independent civilian government the generals just reshuffled its stooge government and is hoping to carry on as before.

It has continued to violate its promise to lift the state of emergency, in force since 1981, military courts continue to try citizens for political crimes and thousands of these are detained and mistreated in jails and military prison camps. In November and December alone, dozens more martyrs have been added to the list of those who have died for the revolution that is now approaching its first anniversary.

But the repression continues to generate mass resistance. The brutal mistreatment of a young woman demonstrator wearing Islamic dress, shown on video, shocked the county and lead to demonstrations by women (10,000 in Cairo and 6,000 in Alexandria) and forced apologies and promises of investigation from the SCAF - though such responses usually worthless.

The SCAF also ignored calls to delay the parliamentary elections. These began on November 28, 2011 were carried out under Mubarak's undemocratic system which bans parties based on class politics and falls well short of embodying universal, equal and direct suffrage.

The new parliament takes shape

Egypt still awaits the results of run-off results for the third and final round but as of 9 January the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) is expected the big winner. It is estimated to have already won 192 seats or 42 per cent of the parliament. But the more radical islamists (Salafists) of the Al- Nour Party have won 108 seats, or 25 per cent of the deputies. Far behind lag the secular bourgeois liberals of Al-Wafd Party with 38 seats and the Egyptian Bloc with 30: respectively with 9 and 7 per cent of the total. The Revolution Continues, a bloc of reformist socialist groups, won ten seats (2.34 per cent).

This clearly gives Islamist forces a huge majority for steamrolling undemocratic and socially reactionary provisions to the constitution through the Assembly. And if the MB candidate were to win the Presidential election too this could have dire consequences for the youth - including the young women - who made the revolution and for the activists of the growing the workers movement.

Of course the huge Islamist majority could also prove a problem for the old guard of the SCAF and there are widespread reports of divisions within the army's ranks. Field Marshal Tantawi and his cronies clearly want only a parliamentary façade for continuing military regime able to go on and the plundering the country's natural resources. The Military control the production of some 30 per cent of the country's GDP. But there are rumours of sharp divisions

within the army, even at its higher levels with some younger figures advocating an alliance with the MB, the withdrawal from politics (except behind the scenes) and the adoption of a model based on the AK regime in Turkey.

The MB - though its leaders certainly are up for a compromise with the military- have beneath them a mass movement with a more radical demands that. In addition the electoral surge of the Salafists, who are more openly opposed to continuing military rule, will put the MB under pressure. Thus it dare not simply let itself be turned into a façade for continuing military rule.

Thus contradiction will continue to wrack the pseudo-democratisation process for the next six months though the threat of a counterrevolution against the revolutionary vanguard and the working class is very serious. The only effective response is if the Egyptian working class continues to mobilise and organise on a mass scale and if the youth and union militant vanguard are able to create a powerful alternative centre of power away from the government and the army. A revolutionary party is essential to make this case, but without a dual power situation, where the workers, peasants, young people and growing numbers of soldiers look to an alternative revolutionary power then the government and SCAF will have a lot of momentum to form a hegemonic counter-revolutionary power in Egypt.

Such a party must aim to popularise its programme and key slogans to the masses ? addressing their main economic and social demands as well as defending their democratic rights against both the generals and the Islamists. It will have to be able - in Egyptian conditions where the forces of repression have survived 2011 largely intact - to survive assaults on its legality. Like the Bolsheviks it may also have to endure its ?July Days? if it is to become the party of an Egyptian October Revolution.

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