

Will The Muslim Brotherhood Make a Comeback? by John Reimann



On Tuesday, July 17, the Egyptian government's interim cabinet was announced. Several appointments serve to confirm our previous perspectives. These appointments can only be understood when the extreme economic crisis of Egypt is taken into account. At present, Egypt lacks enough foreign reserves to finance three months of imports - which puts Egypt in what is considered to be the red zone by economists. The state is running at a massive deficit. The donations from various Arab states may stave off the crisis for a few months, but that is all.

From Greece to the United States, the capitalist prescription to such economic problems is austerity and the "free market" - that is, privatizing everything in sight and eliminating the state role in the economy. At the time that Morsi was running for president, the pressure was already on him to take these steps. Only the pressure from below forced him to stay his hand.

While pressure was applied to Morsi, even before he was elected, to carry out neoliberal economic "reforms", this pressure will double now, especially as the careers of several new cabinet members has revolved around exactly that. The two main issues that are raised by the neo liberals are cutting or ending the fuel subsidy and allowing the Egyptian pound to sink (which would mean price increases). Another issue has been cutting government jobs.



Hazem el-Beblawi – this free marketeer is the face of the new government

This is the context in which we consider some of the appointments:

- **First and foremost is Hazem el-Beblawi, who the Wall Street Journal describes as a "free market champion", as prime minister.**
- **The deputy prime minister for planning and international cooperation, Ziad Bahaa El-Din, is a member of Beblawi's party, the**

Social Democratic Party. (Party's of that name have been carrying out austerity programs throughout Western Europe.)

- **Ahmed Galal is minister of Finance. The Wall St. Journal (7/17) describes him as "a respected economist and former World Bank researcher."**

Extreme Pain

Millions of Egyptians will feel extreme pain from these measures. They will return to the streets once again, but this time under whose banner? None of the former opposition parties, such as the Social Democrats, will be able to protest; they will be the ones carrying it out. One very possible scenario will be that the Muslim Brotherhood and the even more extreme Salafists will lead the protests. This will be entirely hypocritical, but they will then receive renewed support. This would be a set back for the entire Egyptian revolution, first and foremost for women.

The Egyptian revolution has set an example for the entire world rebellion against capitalism. It has done so by its courage and determination. But another example is also being set: Courage and determination are not enough. Until an alternative to the capitalist parties and, ultimately the capitalist state apparatus, is developed, each new upsurge in the Egyptian revolution will be led down one false path after another.

Alternative

From this distance, it is impossible to know how these alternatives can be and are being developed. Are any of the new, independent unions starting to move towards building a workers' political alternative - a new, radical workers' party? Is there a real potential for the women's self defense committees on the streets to start to be filled out and take on the issue of security as a whole as well as other issues?

It is questions like these that the Egyptian revolution will have to answer as it moves forward. In doing so, it will be providing some answers for the world wide rebellion that is under way.

