Abstract: The upheaval that has swept the Arab world, beginning in December 2010, reached Egypt on January 25, 2011. The article argues that capitalist globalization and ultimately the 2008 global financial crisis were main causes of the uprising. The Mubarak regime’s privatization schemes exacerbated poverty and widened the already huge gap between rich and poor. Mubarak employed repression to ensure that no effective political opposition would materialize to challenge his authoritarian rule and crony capitalism. Strikes and demonstrations beginning in 2006 and the lead up to the uprising demonstrated that the fight for democracy and economic justice had been intertwined. The ouster of Mubarak has not improved the economic situation for the majority of the population and authoritarian rule remained under the military and since the election of the Islamist President Morsi. Popular resistance continues against the Islamists in power to bring about a secular regime that would establish democracy and economic justice.

Keywords: Muslim Brothers, trajectories of resistance, Infitah, privatization, Arab upheaval, global capitalism

Introduction

Since December 2010 the Arab world has entered an unprecedented period of political change. The Egyptian uprising remains one of the most significant political developments of the twenty-first century. Was the uprising part of a global process of resistance to a capitalist world system that culminated in a general financial and economic crisis? Was it merely a consequence of repression and authoritarian rule under Mubarak? Was it a combination of internal and external factors in the context of global capitalism?

Global Capitalism and Crisis

Global capitalism is in a state of crisis and decline (Amin 2011b). The end of the nineteenth century is when the decline began. That was when “the destructive dimensions of accumulation now won out, at a growing rate, over its progressive, constructive dimension” (ibid.: 3). The decline was expressed “in the first wave of
wars and revolutions” of the twentieth century (ibid.). The reconstruction of the
capitalist system after World War II ended the crisis. However, the 1970s saw the
beginning of “a second, long structural crisis of the system” (ibid.). The recovery
that ensued lasted from 1990 to 2008 (ibid.: 5).

Wallerstein (2003) contends that chaos in the global capitalist system is pervasive
and resistance to the domination of the Triad (the US, Europe and Japan) has spread
and is more visible. So has been the capitalist system’s decline (29). Witness,
for instance, the current economic and financial crisis of the European Union, on
the one hand, and the resistance to NATO’s military interventions, on the other.
The “third wave of devastation of the world imperialist expansion” right after the
demise of the Soviet Union is readily observable in the military interventions of
NATO and the US and its allies. Those military interventions have occurred to put
a stop to the decline through the control of markets, super-exploitation of labor
power, and “looting” natural resources (ibid.). Foster (2006) observed that in the
Clinton presidency, “neoliberal globalization and geopolitics governed foreign
policy, but the former often took precedence” (11). However, in the George W.
Bush presidency the reverse held true (ibid.). Feffer (2003) stresses the same point
as he lays out neo-conservative ideology and unilateral strategy in pursuit of US
geopolitical strategy, which focused on “Full Spectrum Dominance” (Mahajan,
2003). The war on terror was essentially a war to maintain control over or capture
additional resources in the global South (Rogers, 2004). Amin (2001) also shows
the relationship between the imperial project and globalization led by the US to
secure its dominance of global capitalism.

Furthermore, Wallerstein (2011) argues that by the 1990s the attacks on the
welfare state intensified compared to the 1970s when those attacks began (35).
The resistance to the Washington Consensus that Wallerstein (2003) described
as “the abandonment and denigration of developmentalism” (25) had “three
main moments”: “the neo-Zapatista uprising in Chiapas on January 1, 1994; the
demonstrations against the World Trade Organization in Seattle, which scuttled
the attempt to enact worldwide constraints on intellectual property rights; and the
founding of the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre in 2001” (ibid.).

Wallerstein, however, neglects to mention other critical “moments” of resistance;
namely, the nationalist/indigenous struggles in Latin America following the
Zapatistas’ struggle in Mexico. Here Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, Evo Morales in
Bolivia and Raphael Correa in Ecuador are cases in point. Furthermore, the World
Social Forum includes grassroots global resistance to Zionism and the exclusivist
state of Israel. The resistance in Palestine and Lebanon to Israeli aggression further
constitutes another significant “moment.”

One could add to Wallerstein’s moments others that occurred in or after 2003.
(1) The Iraqi resistance to occupation that compelled the US to withdraw from Iraq.
(2) The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement that bolstered the global resistance to Zionism. (3) The Arab uprisings. Those trajectories of resistance, Wallerstein’s “moments,” demonstrate the widespread opposition to US hegemonic control of global capitalism.

Another related development to the above is the resistance to US global hegemony emanating from the rise of the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). The rivalry between the BRICS, on the one hand and the US and its allies, on the other, is a defining feature of the current international situation. It further proves that US power is in decline relative to the rise of the BRICS, especially Russia and China. Peter Gowan (2003) observed that although the Europeans built the Euro Zone intending to shield themselves from the US dollar and the East Asian countries show movement towards regional cooperation, “no other capitalist center has advanced an alternative program for international capitalist accumulation or proclaimed its capitalism as an alternative model to that of the United States” (42). Gowan argues that only an alternative model could counter or defeat US hegemony. The US and its allies might then mount serious resistance to its competitors while losing legitimacy at home (ibid.).

After the collapse of the USSR, which changed the global situation, the US saw the European Union and the Euro Zone as threats to its hegemony. However, the US was able to maneuver quickly to contain the threat through maintaining and expanding NATO eastward and solidifying ties with the Baltic and East European states. Those maneuvers blunted European opposition to US attempts to unilateral hegemony over the entire globe. The US succeeded also in containing popular challenges in both the North and the South through the 1990s (ibid.: 47-48).

Furthermore, the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003 respectively consolidated the US global position vis-à-vis its competitors. US control of Iraqi oil halted the “growing cohesion and influence of Western Europe” (ibid.: 48). However, the rise of Russia and China made it impossible for the US to consolidate the hub-and-spokes unipolar model of hegemony developed after WWII (ibid.).

China emerged as a major “capitalist center” (ibid.: 30) and has become a serious competitor to the US, which has borrowed heavily from China to finance its debt (Amin, 2003: 19).

Insofar as the current period is concerned, Amin (2011b) observes:

The second wave of independent initiatives of the countries of the South has begun. The “emerging” countries and others, like their peoples, are fighting the ways in which the collective imperialism of the Triad [the US, Western Europe and Japan] tries to perpetuate its domination. The military interventions of Washington and their subaltern NATO allies have also proved a failure. The world financial system is collapsing and, in its
place, autonomous regional systems are in the process of being set up. The technological monopoly of the oligopolies has been thwarted. (13)

Short of an all out war the US cannot do much to prevent China from exercising its power on a global scale. Furthermore, the US has failed in its strategic goals in both Afghanistan and Iraq. It no longer can control the South, a *sine qua non* for its domination of global capitalism. The resistance to US domination includes the BRICS countries, but West Asia and Egypt are currently at the center of that resistance. In the past two years Syria has emerged as the main battleground where the US has been utilizing multiple instruments, military, political and diplomatic, to bring the regime down and disintegrate the State. Through its regional allies, primarily Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Israel and Turkey, the US has plunged the Middle East into chaos and war.

The popular Arab uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt ousted two dictators allied with the US. Bahrain and Yemen quickly followed and Bahrain’s uprising continues unabated. However, the US moved quickly to coopt those uprisings and has largely succeeded in doing so. In Libya the US opted for regime change and used its own firepower in the first days of the attacks and then operated through the cover of NATO, leaving the bulk of the fighting to the British and French. Libya today is in utter chaos and the fighting continues among local rival tribes and groupings.

In Syria, the US rode the wave of discontent with the regime to transform the uprising into a war of attrition and bring down the Assad regime. However, it is clear that the US has encountered massive difficulties in achieving its goal and the Syrian conflagration threatens to spread across the Middle East region. The region is currently the site of big power politics with each power working to protect its own interests. The consequences of big power rivalry are plainly inimical to the interests of the peoples in the region.

The development of Egypt’s political economy under Sadat and Mubarak and the January 25, 2011 uprising that followed, demonstrate the link between the US regional project of domination and Mubarak’s political repression perpetrated against the Egyptian people.

**Political Economic Development in Egypt**

Egypt’s national capitalist development of the Nasser years (1952-70) were basically abandoned by Sadat’s *Infitah* as soon as he consolidated his political power as Egypt’s president after Nasser’s death in September 1970 (Hopwood, 1982: 110). The constitution of September 9, 1971 guaranteed him dictatorial powers well beyond the presidential powers that Nasser already had (ibid.: 110-111). The 1973 October war further consolidated his regime and in 1974 he decreed Law No.
Sadat approached the World Bank for loans late in 1976 and ended subsidies of food staples in January 1977 as the World Bank demanded. He further canceled salary increases and bonuses. The uprising that followed on January 18 and 19, 1977 was violently suppressed (Hopwood, 1982: 115). In July 1978 Sadat founded the National Democratic Party (NDP) which gave him a social support base and significantly limited the already meager power of the opposition parties (ibid.). The Sadat regime abruptly ended with his assassination on October 6, 1981. The Peace Treaty of March 1979 with the State of Israel had sealed his fate.

Hosni Mubarak, Sadat’s vice-president, succeeded him to the presidency and continued the transformation of Egypt’s political economy at a faster pace than Sadat who applied the brakes to that transformation after the January 1977 uprising. He wanted to deter the eruption of another popular uprising that might threaten his rule. The emergency law that Mubarak put in place after the Sadat assassination gave him even more powers than his predecessor. He further expanded the NDP’s political reach to better serve his interests in a global economic climate that witnessed high levels of integration that had been disastrous to national capitalist development (Aoudé, 1994: 15). However, high levels of debt in the global economy resulted in a global recession whose adverse effects descended on Egypt in 1986. While the first several years of Mubarak’s rule witnessed high levels of economic growth, high budget deficits and the increasing debt as a consequence of the global crisis, militated against the recovery of Egypt’s economy (World Bank, 1991: 91). The privatizing of the public sector weakened the structures of the Egyptian economy and he reduced “barriers to trade and price distortions in the economy” (ibid.). Reducing “price distortions” is a euphemism for increasing prices on food staples and other commodities primarily through the lifting of subsidies on those commodities.

The Egyptian debt crisis of 1982-90 had been the result of economic policies since the beginning of Infitah under Sadat, which accelerated under Mubarak. Privatizing the public sector constituted the core of those economic policies that had been perpetrated by a regime that promoted parasitic capital both local and global. The consequence of those policies had been the creation and maintenance of a parasitic bureaucratic capitalist class tied to global capital. In this connection:

When the Egyptian debt crisis of 1982-1990 forced [Egypt] to go to the multinational Paris Club to restructure its debt, the IMF imposed a neoliberal structural adjustment program as a condition for continuing the flow of credit. The IMF conditions forced the government to cut spending on social services, relax price controls, cut subsidies, deregulate and privatize industries, target inflation, and liberalize capital flows. This program would break...
the powerful Arab Nationalist regional solidarity of the Nasser years and consolidate the power of a ruling class linked to global capital, with whatever disastrous consequences that entailed for the lower classes. (Maher, 2011: 33)

The World Bank itself which had been pressuring the Egyptian State to “liberalize” (privatize) the economy recognized three externalities (unintended consequences) to the structural adjustments in the economy. Specifically, privatization had the following costs associated with it: First, major layoffs in the public and governmental sectors. Second, price inflation. Third, dwindling social services as a consequence of budget cuts. The poor and the middle-income workers had been the most affected by neoliberal policies forced on the Egyptians primarily through privatization.

Neoliberal policies resulted in the gutting of the public healthcare system and deteriorating infrastructure and working conditions for the bulk of the population. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Egypt was one of the worst 25 international labor law violators on earth (Maher, 2011: 34).

However, macro economic indicators had obscured those negative consequences. Per capita gross domestic product, for instance, quadrupled under Mubarak in terms of purchasing power parity (a measure comparing economic activity among countries while keeping constant the current currency exchange rates). Therefore, it would be absolutely necessary to go beyond those macro economic indicators to determine whether or not the bulk of the population benefited from those high levels of economic growth. Under Mubarak inequality had risen considerably (ibid.: 34-35). The repressive Mubarak regime and its control of all social institutions, including the Egyptian Trade Union Federation left the workers with no vehicle to protect them (ibid.).

Privatization and the development of a parasitic capitalist class under Mubarak resulted in complications and contradictions to the regime: First, the bureaucratic capitalist elite’s base was the public sector that arose as a consequence of gutting that sector. Second, global and local capital primarily engaged in the service sector and light industry and shunned production. Third, privatization created insurmountable structural economic, social and political problems that ultimately were the main causes of the January 25, 2011 uprising (Amin, 2011a).

The Lead Up to the Uprising

It is critical to discuss the lead up to the uprising of January 25, 2011 to have a better appreciation for the elements that were critical in defining it. It is significant to note that the uprising has been described in many ways, including it being a “revolution.” Abd el-Fattah (2011), contends that the January 25 to February 11 events lack the elements that might describe them as a “revolution” (3-4). Western media are
enamored of the influence of high technology in mobilization of the Egyptian masses to the point of regarding the social media sites as responsible in large measure for creating the uprising. Undoubtedly, the social media have played a significant role in facilitating communication among the people. Maher (2011: 37-39) explains the role of the social media in his discussion of the uprising. However, it was the economic and political crisis that propelled literally millions of people to pour into the streets and rally against the regime and its practices (ibid.; Amin, 2011a).

As early as 2005, new social forces came to the fore. It was Kifaya (enough) as a movement calling for democracy that came onto the scene (Shorbagy, 2007). It comprised a coalition of forces from the neoliberal to the Islamist and communist. Meanwhile, the privatization of the public sector and the gutting of the government sector widened the gap between rich and poor so that currently 40 percent of the Egyptian people live under the poverty line. Between 2004 and 2010 about 3,000 labor actions took place (Maher, 2011: 36). Significant workers’ strikes and demonstrations took place beginning in 2007. It was the first time in recent memory that the workers struck by the thousands. Furthermore, bread riots across Egypt occurred in the midst of the world food crisis in that year (ibid.). However, the first main strike of political significance in terms of recent mass mobilizations was the one conducted by 25,000 workers from Misr Spinning and Weaving in al-Mahalla al-Kubra in the Nile Delta (ibid.). It was slated for April 6, 2008. Youth groups wanted to convert it into a general strike throughout Egypt for all sectors of society. They utilized social media sites to communicate with youth groups across Egypt. The April Sixth Youth Movement was born out of the workers’ struggles. The security forces broke the workers’ strike, which, despite its failure, was followed by numerous other strikes in industrial centers across Egypt. Another significant strike took place in late 2009 in which 10,000 municipal tax collectors and their supporters won “a 325 percent wage increase and the right to form an independent labor union, the first in Egypt’s modern history” (ibid.). Strikes continued until the uprising, which was initially led by the youth. The scores of thousands of workers who participated in it constituted a main component of the uprising. Furthermore all sectors of society took an active part in it (Amin, 2011a).

It is instructive to point out that the World Bank considered Egypt a model for neoliberal policies. An IMF report a few days before the uprising spoke of Egypt’s neoliberal measures in laudatory terms. In fact, Egypt’s Finance Minister was named to become the IMF chair and member of the Financial Committee (Maher, 2011: 36).

The January 25th Uprising

A close reading of the political economy and the lead up to the uprising would show that the social movement had been developing rapidly in the past several
years before January 25. The uprising came as a surprise to Western observers and governments (Amin, 2011a: 12). The youth began the uprising and the left and the middle class answered the call. From the beginning the Muslim Brothers (MBs) decided to stay away, expecting the regime to crush the protesters. They joined four days later after the millions of people poured into the streets of Egypt (ibid.: 12-13). The secular character of the uprising was indisputable, even after the MBs joined in. The secular character of the uprising was also reflected in its slogans of democracy, social justice (a new economic development strategy independent of neoliberal globalization) and a foreign policy that expressed the will of the Egyptian people, not the imperial dominance of the US (ibid.: 13; Interviews with National Progressive Unionist Party (NPUP), Communist and Socialist leaders, 2011, 2012).

At first the MBs were among the parties and groupings that agreed to the regime’s call for dialogue, but the 15-million-strong protests clearly showed that the masses were in no mood for dialogue (ibid.). The youth branch of the MBs pushed the organization to participate by itself joining the protests on the third day without orders from the organization (Interviews with youth leaders, 2011 and 2012).

The NPUP did not participate either, but indicated that its members may do so as individuals (Interview with the General Secretary of the NPUP, 2011). Even when the MBs, the NPUP, the Communists and the Wafd party joined in the protests, the uprising continued to lack a clear centralized leadership. Maher (2011: 38) celebrated the movement’s “horizontal and decentralized organizational form.” However, the decentralized, often chaotic, character of the uprising was at once its strength and weakness. As later events did show, the Muslim Brothers were the only organized force capable of taking advantage of the chaos. They had their following (roughly 5 million) and the popular support of the other parties paled in comparison to that of the MBs (Interviews with youth leaders, 2011 and 2012).

Economic losses mounted to the tune of $310 million per day. On February 9, 2011 a general strike of workers across Egypt was instrumental in ending Mubarak’s rule.

The Revolutionary Situation After the Uprising

In the post-Mubarak political space immediately after February 11, 2011 the old regime remained entrenched in the state institutions and had substantial support in the private sector. Foreign states, both Arab and Western, but primarily the US, Qatar and Saudi Arabia have influence over Egyptian state and mass politics, including Islamist groupings such as the MBs. In fact the US had already conducted dialogue with the MBs and early on it appeared that the US would not be opposed to their assumption of political power (Interviews with Socialist Party, NPUP and Communist leaders, 2011, 2012).
The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) continued with Mubarak’s foreign policy, especially the 1979 peace treaty with Israel. From the ouster of Mubarak till July 2011 the military detained roughly 11,000 individuals, many of whom were tortured and put on trial in military courts. The Mubarak regime’s cadre remained entrenched in state institutions (Interviews with activists, 2011).

Since its assumption of political power SCAF had curious relations with the MBs. It appeared sometimes to be dealing with them in earnest and sometimes it appeared as if it was working to sabotage their political moves. This was most evident in terms of the brewing fight over who would get to choose the members of the committee to submit recommendations regarding the new Constitution that was supposed to be written after the presidential and parliamentary elections take place (Interviews with former Communists, 2011, 2012). The military maneuvered to sabotage the MBs’ plan for such a committee in which they and their allies then, the Salafis and the secular neoliberal Wafdist party, would have most influence.

The larger point here is that the development of the post-Mubarak regime began on the wrong footing with SCAF effectively ruling the country through the appointment of Prime Ministers to form cabinets they could control. It is interesting to note that, given the history of collaboration between the US military and SCAF, the latter was squarely in the corner of the US.

Foreign and domestic state and non-state actors have been trying to push the country on a sectarian trajectory through the burning of churches, killing of Christians and terrorizing them. However, the struggle of the fighting masses based on what might be called the “Millioniyya Tactics” (mass protests involving hundreds of thousands at a minimum) has, thus far, derailed much of the machinations of the reactionary forces (foreign and domestic) and frustrated the moves of the US to secure a “New American Century” based on its recent gains in the Arab world. The sacrifices of the ordinary people have been huge and have continued in Tahrir II in November 2011 and up to the current period. A reading of Tahrir II in the context of the uprising, clearly demonstrates that things are still in flux and the struggle between the will of the masses and the new neo-imperialism continues unabated.

The political strategy of the progressive forces helped in continuing the protests. In April 2011, the Popular Democratic Alliance, constituted from former members of the NPUP, the Democratic Labor Party, the Socialist Revolutionary Party and the Egyptian Communist Party joined with the Egyptian Socialist Party to form an Alliance of Socialist Forces. Concomitantly, a National Council was formed with about 150 member organizations, including the Alliance of Socialist Forces and peasant organizations, independent unions and multiple community associations. It is significant to note that the Islamist parties and groupings, the MBs, the Salafis and such and other right-wing parties refused to join in a clear indication of their
refusal to continue the mass struggle with the forces that began the uprising (Amin, 2011a: 14-15; Interviews with Socialists, 2011, 2012).

Arguably, Tahrir II represented a transition to a second stage of the struggle of the masses in their own defense and for their own emancipation from foreign domination aided and abetted by domestic forces who might believe in elections to attain power, but who would institute a political system steeped in Islamism. However, such a system would not be able to solve the domestic effects of the ongoing global economic crisis, given the Islamists’ belief in capitalism and their agreement with neoliberalism. The Islamist slogan “Islam is the Solution” (ibid.: 22) speaks volumes about the bankruptcy of the Islamists in solving the chronic problems that Sadat and Mubarak have left Egypt to suffer from.

It is not hard to imagine that, given its recent history in the region, the US would support any regime that would guarantee its interests (Saddam, Ben Ali, Mubarak and Ali Abdallah Saleh are cases in point). Consequently, the US modus vivendi with the Islamists is to be expected. On the US policy level, the groupings that, for decades, have argued that the US should favor the Islamists to come to power rather than keep depending upon and propping up the (secular) dictators, seem to have finally won the latest round in foreign policy circles. But this policy depends upon an Orientalist reading of the Arab world, which one might be contented with, except for the steep price that would be paid in human life and the destruction of the environment.

The post-Mubarak political conjuncture is both fluid and chaotic. Witness the confrontations that have occurred against the rule of SCAF and more recently against the presidency of Morsi and the rule of the MBs in general. The old political parties have failed to capture the imagination of the population, despite increases in their membership base. This observation applies to all the main parties and groupings, primarily the MBs, Salafis, and Jihadists on the Islamist side and the NPUP, Communists, socialists and Wafidis on the secular side. But these numbers pale in comparison to the tens of thousands of youths who are organizing independently of those political trends most of which have been essentially discredited in the uprising by a majority of Egyptians (Interviews with activist youth, NPUP and Communist leaders, 2011, 2012).

A weakness of the post-Mubarak political space, insofar as the progressive forces are concerned, is the lack of a unified command on the ground of all or most of the secular groupings, despite the formation of the Salvation Front, made of secular forces, liberals, nationalists and leftists who would benefit from such a move by guaranteeing the secular nature of the uprising in opposition to the Islamists.

In the SCAF period the progressive youth fought in the defense of the uprising by demanding speedy trials of Mubarak’s cronies, the ouster of the Mubarak supporters from state institutions, trials of those who committed crimes against the protestors,
the release of all those detained before and after the ouster of Mubarak, and social justice through economic reforms that would diminish the gap between the wealthy and the majority of the population.

New political forces that have been politicized since the ouster of Mubarak characterize the post-Mubarak political space. For three weeks in July 2011 and until August 1, for example, the families of the martyrs, and the homeless occupied Tahrir square, demanding justice for the martyrs through monetary compensations for the families of the martyrs and speedy trials for those implicated in the death of their loved ones (personal observations, Tahrir Square, 2011; Interviews with activists, 2011).

Several times since, thousands of people have poured into the streets and squares of Egypt to protest SCAF policies and repression or Muslim Brothers' political influence. Protests occurred on June 2, 2012 against the results of the first round of the presidential elections in which Ahmad Chafic, a stalwart of the old regime and the last Prime Minister under Mubarak, faced Mohammed Morsi of the Muslim Brothers. The security forces had much to do with Chafic’s winning instead of a Nasserist candidate, Hamdeen Sabbahi. Bartholet (2012: 79) reports, “This view [on security] is not uncommon in the country-side. Nearly everywhere we go, Egyptians express anxiety about al-amn—security.”

The Arab dimension of the uprising cannot be overemphasized. The resurgence of the Nasserist parties is an indicator of this reality. Here, the matter of the peace treaty with Israel and the support for the Palestinian cause are paramount. The takeover of the Israeli Embassy in Cairo on September 11, 2011 (Glick, 2011) clearly reflected the sentiments of the vast majority of Egyptians insofar as the state of Israel was concerned.

In both the domestic dimension—social and economic justice, jobs, housing, etc.—and the regional dimension, the secular forces can only defend the demands of the uprising through a unified command and vigilance aimed at protecting Egypt’s future from both internal and external enemies.

**Post-Election Political Space**

The presidential elections of June 16-17, 2012 between Morsi (the Muslim Brothers candidate) and Chafic (supported by SCAF, the forces of the old regime, and some progressive forces) changed the face of politics in Egypt as it brought for the first time the rule of the Muslim Brothers to Egypt. The electoral strength of the Muslim Brothers was 5 million voters out of 51 million eligible voters.

However, in the presidential elections they received 7 million votes that included liberal, nationalist and leftist voters who preferred to vote for Morsi rather than
Chafic, the old regime candidate (Ma’ al-Hadath, 2012b). On June 25, 2012 Morsi delivered a speech to the Egyptian people, stating that he loved his people and promised democracy and economic development to lift up Egypt from its poverty (ibid.). A day earlier, hundreds of thousands of protesters went into the streets in support of Chafic. On August 12, 2012 SCAF was dissolved. Four main political forces filled the political space: The military, Islamists (both Muslim Brothers and Salafis), pro-Western liberals, and revolutionary youth. Multiple organizations constituted each of those main forces. Another way of classifying those main forces is as follows: SCAF, the Muslim Brothers, the old regime supporters, the Third Way (against both Morsi and Chafic) and the Salafis (Ma’ al-Hadath, 2012a).

On November 22, 2012 Morsi announced his Constitutional Declaration in which he assumed complete judicial and legislative powers in addition to his vast presidential powers. Right after the Declaration protests engulfed all of the main Egyptian cities and remained in force until Morsi retracted it on December 9, 2012.

After the parliamentary elections which began on November 28 and were conducted in stages, the elections for the Consultative Council took place on January 29, 2013. The Muslim Brothers gained a ruling majority in both chambers and they and the Salafis had an overwhelming majority.

Things deteriorated even more after the massacre in Port Said that took place at a soccer field on February 1, 2012 in which 70 people were killed and hundreds wounded. Violent protests continued and on December 4-5, 2012 a clash between protestors, on one hand, and the security forces and Muslim Brothers, on the other, led to more violence (Russia Today, 2012).

The security situation continues to deteriorate with no end in sight and protestors are now calling for a military coup (Kirkpatrick and Faheem, 2013: 19). Rates of 40 percent poverty and 51 percent illiteracy among Egyptians does not portend well for the country under the rule of the Muslim Brothers. Egypt is now experiencing power cuts and shortages of fuel, and is running out of hard currency. In the midst of all of this, “United States officials warn disaster unless Egypt soon carries out a package of tax increases and subsidy cuts tied to a $4.8 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund…” (Kirkpatrick, 2013). Rather than improve the situation, that recommendation would inflame it even more, given the level of poverty in the country.

As recently as April 6, 2013, the youth of the April Sixth Movement demonstrated across Egypt on the sixth anniversary of their founding to demand the resignation of the Muslim Brothers’ government under the leadership of Hisham Qandeel and the formation of a cabinet that expresses the aspirations of the Egyptian people and continue on the path of the January 25, 2011 uprising for democracy, social justice and freedom (Ma’ al-Hadath, 2013).
Conclusion

The neoliberal policies of the Sadat and Mubarak period dismantled the state capitalist system constructed under Nasser. *Infitah* facilitated Egypt’s entry into the global capitalist system. US military and economic aid guaranteed that Egypt would become a satellite of the US. The uprising was a consequence of the global political economy that devastated the popular classes. The continuing uprising further proves that the progressive mass movement has no intention of relinquishing the mass secular demands of January 25, 2011.

The US still exerts much influence in Egyptian politics as evidenced by the presidential elections in which Morsi won the race. The nationalist, leftist forces and the youth continue to gain ground against neoliberalism that the Morsi government is pursuing. The Islamist slogan of “Islam is the Solution” cannot change the realities of the neoliberal policies of the capitalist MBs. The revolutionary situation seems to be on the side of the left despite the great odds arrayed against them.

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