

# The Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic “democracy” in Egypt as part of the New World Order\*

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## **Abstract**

*The aim of this article is to show that the Muslim Brotherhood’s rise to power in Egypt (as well as in Tunisia before it) has been engineered by the transnational elite, with the help of the local elites and the US-dependent local armies, since the previous client autocratic regimes were politically bankrupt and clearly incapable of imposing the “economic restructuring” required by neoliberal globalization without the occurrence of serious social turbulence. The Muslim Brotherhood’s rise to power will secure the integration of the countries concerned into the New World Order of neoliberal globalization and representative “democracy” in a new form of more sophisticated client regime based on Islamic “democratization,” whereby all the rituals and paraphernalia of “democracy” are present. The first part of this article deals with the Muslim Brotherhood’s rise to power and attempts to explain why it was chosen as the main instrument of the New World Order in the Middle East. The second part puts forward the case that the Muslim Brotherhood’s rise to power represents a new form of “democratic” client regime in the Middle East, in place of the autocratic client regimes which had been dominant in the area since the end of the Second World War.*

## **PART I: THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD’S RISE TO POWER**

### ***The “democratic” rise to power of the Islamists***

The Muslim Brotherhood (MB), the oldest Islamic organization, won a major victory in the 2011-12 Egyptian parliamentary elections, with 47.2% of the vote and 235 seats out of 498, whereas another, even more conservative Islamic organization, the Salafists, took around 30% of the vote and 123 seats.<sup>1</sup> Thus, if we add Salafists in the Islamist group of power, as we should, given the high degree of ideological and political affinity between the two organizations, conservative Islamists seemed to control between them about three quarters of

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\* This article is an extract from the forthcoming book *Redesigning the Middle East: The Arab “Revolutions,” Counter-Revolution in Iran and Regime Change* (Clarity Press, 2013).

<sup>1</sup> Alaa al-Din Arafat, “Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood divides,” *Le Monde Diplomatique* (May 2012).

the electorate. However, although nobody could doubt the power of the MB, there is a striking discrepancy as regards the voting patterns of the countryside, where most of the peasantry (characterized by very high rates of illiteracy and the associated with it high degree of religious irrationality), live, versus those of the main urban centers, Cairo and Alexandria, where almost a fifth of the country's population and many, if not most, of the workers, self-employed, and employed in the services, as well as of the country's unemployed and underemployed, are concentrated. As regards illiteracy in particular, Egypt has a very high illiteracy rate, as shown by the very low literacy rate among adults (15 and older), which amounts to 75% of the male population (vs. a world average of 87%) and 58% of the female population (vs. 76% world average).<sup>2</sup>

Concerning the voting patterns, the Brotherhood, following its victory in the parliamentary elections it went on to win also the June 2012 presidential elections, with its candidate, Mohamad Morsi, elected as the first "democratic" President of Egypt (who studied and taught in the California university system before returning to Egypt to enter politics, winning election as an MP in 2000), but by only 51% of the vote. The victory of the MB in both the parliamentary and the presidential elections was hardly surprising, given that it is Egypt's best-organized opposition group, which has an estimated 600,000 members.<sup>3</sup> Yet, there were reports and witnesses who testified that MB candidates were blackmailing and bribing poor Egyptians with food and, as an RT correspondent reported, people in the Nile Delta were being offered bribes of a few dollars and a meal to vote for MB candidates.<sup>4</sup> Similar reports emerged about the very recent constitutional referendum.<sup>5</sup> However, even more significant than the reports about irregularities are the voting patterns, both as regards the very high and growing with every election abstention rates but also with regards to the long term trend in the MB vote itself.

Thus, there were four main electoral contests following the January 25 "Revolution" in 2011. First, the March 19 constitutional referendum (which put a constitution temporarily into effect until a new one was drafted), which had a turnout of 41%, then the parliamentary elections with an overall turnout (for all phases) of 59%, followed by the June presidential elections with a turnout of 52% and finally the December 2012 referendum on the new constitution drafted by the MB, where the turnout was the lowest ever: 33%,<sup>6</sup> forcing even the establishment *Economist* to comment sarcastically "not much of an endorsement

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<sup>2</sup> World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2010*, Table 2.14.

<sup>3</sup> Ian Black, "A force the world can no longer afford to ignore," *The Guardian* (7/2/2011).

<sup>4</sup> Paula Slier, "Muslim Brotherhood bribing voters as Egypt chooses new leader," *Russia Today* (24/5/2012). <http://rt.com/news/egypt-president-elections-fraud-026/>

<sup>5</sup> Mahmoud Khaled, "Fraud allegations as Egypt Islamists claim constitution poll win," *The Times* (17/12/2012).

<sup>6</sup> Ekram Ibrahim and Nada El-Kouny, "Analysis: Voting pattern sees little change in Egypt since revolution," *Al Ahram*. <http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/60653.aspx>

for a constitution promoted as the Brothers' crowning achievement and as a blueprint for the country's future"<sup>7</sup>! A definite growing trend of indifference for representative "democracy" could clearly be established from these figures. Furthermore, the results show a clear trend of a diminishing MB appeal to the electorate. As Hani Shukrallah stressed recently, "in the space of a few months, between the parliamentary elections (28 November 2011 - 11 January 2012) and the first round of the presidential elections (23 - 24 May 2012), the Brotherhood had managed to lose over half its electoral base – nearly seven million votes."<sup>8</sup> For the author this is far from surprising since, as he aptly pointed out,

A Brotherhood in power that is happy to collaborate with the US and Israel in fighting terrorism in Sinai; speaks of strategic ties with Washington; signs a typically stringent loan deal with the IMF; shows astonishing ineptitude and lack of vision; fails to deliver on any of its own promises, let alone the promises of the revolution; and is hailed by the US and Europe for its role in "containing" Hamas and safeguarding Israel's security is a Brotherhood that has lost whatever mystique it once had.<sup>9</sup>

However, what is the most important conclusion that could be drawn from the above election results is that the working classes and the urban poor in general have not favored the MB. This is confirmed both by the presidential elections and the referendum results. Thus, in Cairo, Morsi received only 42.3% of the votes in the presidential elections in June, whereas in the referendum vote, in December 2012, the "yes" vote (for the MB constitution) was again only 43.1%. As regards Alexandria, in the first round of the presidential election, the city surprised many by voting for Nasserist candidate Hamdeen Sabbahi instead of Shafiq or Morsi, despite the fact that the city is considered the Salafists' hometown and Islamists' stronghold. In the referendum, where all Islamists in the city joined in voting "yes" for the constitution, they managed to get a 55.6% "yes" vote. Finally, in the Gharbiya governorate, home to the industrial cities of Mahalla Al-Kubra and Tanta, which as we have seen in previous chapters have a long history of workers' struggles, particularly against the Mubarak regime, the "yes" vote at 47.87 per cent was beaten by the "no" vote.<sup>10</sup>

As one could expect, the "natural" favorites of the transnational elite, i.e. the liberals, the Facebook Youth candidates and the likes, were all but obliterated in the above contests. The liberal New Wafd and the Egyptian Bloc coalition came third and fourth respectively in the parliamentary elections, whereas "The

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<sup>7</sup> "A dubious yes," *The Economist* (22/12/2012). <http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21568756-flawed-constitution-will-be-endorsed-argument-far-over>

<sup>8</sup> Hani Shukrallah, "The decline and fall of the Muslim Brotherhood," *Al Ahrām* (6/12/2012). <http://connect.freedomworks.org/news/view/333952?destination=gac%2Fhome>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ekram Ibrahim and Nada El-Kouny, "Analysis: Voting pattern sees little change in Egypt since revolution."

Revolution Continues" coalition, dominated by youth groups at the forefront of the protests that toppled Mubarak (i.e. the Facebook Youth), attracted less than a million votes and took just seven of the 498 seats up for grabs in the lower house.<sup>11</sup> As a result, the liberals, the middle classes, and the Facebook youth did not manage to promote as a presidential candidate any of their favorite candidates. Thus, neither Moussa nor ElBaradei managed to make it to the final round, although the former (who worked as foreign minister under Hosni Mubarak), as secretary general of the Arab League played a crucial role in inviting NATO to massacre the people of Libya, while the latter (who pulled out early of the presidential race, presumably assessing as nil his chances of success, particularly after his outing by his own movement as a western stooge!<sup>12</sup>), was considered "a top choice for a lot of liberals."<sup>13</sup> No wonder that, the first round of presidential elections left Egyptians with a choice between an Islamist candidate and an ex-prime minister from the Mubarak era, prompting the London *Times* to write in an editorial that "these are not the candidates, and that is not the choice, that Western governments would have preferred."<sup>14</sup>

The events following the election of the Muslim Brotherhood candidate as president showed clearly the character of the new regime as one based on Islamic "democratization," whereas the liberal forces of the "revolution" were simply passed by. Indicatively, when the main organ of the international "liberal Left," the *Guardian*, raised the question "Who will the new president choose as a prime minister?" the obvious for it answer was "A non-Brotherhood figure – Mohamed ElBaradei is being mooted – could signal pluralism and help deflect heat on the economy."<sup>15</sup> But, ElBaradei was not going to be the new PM. Instead, Hisham Qandil was appointed as PM, a US-educated engineer who was water resources minister in the last military-appointed cabinet and not a member of Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice party (FJP), although, as his BBC profile states, "is believed to be religious and once said he had grown his beard as a sign of piety "in line with the Sunnah" – the Prophet Muhammad's words and actions"<sup>16</sup>. Qandil, in turn, appointed a cabinet of mainly technocrats (only a handful from the FJP).

### ***Political Islamism and the Left***

However, before we proceed to examine the politics of Egyptian Islamists, a brief

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<sup>11</sup> Reuters, "Islamists secure top spot in new Egypt parliament" (21/1/2012).

<sup>12</sup> El Baradei was outed by Mamdouh Hamza, a prominent member of ElBaradei's own National Front for Change, as "having strong ties to Zionist institutions" and sitting directly on the board of trustees of George Soros' International Crisis Group; see Tony Cartalucci, "ElBaradei Outed by Own Movement as Western Stooge," *Land Destroyer* (1/12/2011).

<sup>13</sup> "No choice for Egyptians? ElBaradei pulls out of presidential race," RT (14/1/2012).

<sup>14</sup> "After the Arab Spring," Leader in *The Times* (26/5/2012).

<sup>15</sup> Ian Black, "Morsi wins – but military's power remains," *The Guardian* (25/6/2012).

<sup>16</sup> "Profile: Egypt Prime Minister Hisham Qandil," *BBC News* (3/8/2012).

digression is needed to avoid any misunderstandings or distortions about my stand on Islamism, as a political, as well as a religious, ideology. Clearly, my stand against Egyptian Islamism does not arise out of the modern brand of political correctness promoted by the dictates of the transnational elite, which implies a selective rejection of religious irrationalism, according to the basic criterion of whether it is friendly or not towards the New World Order (NWO) based on neoliberal globalization and representative “democracy” that the transnational elite has been imposing by economic or military force all over the world since the emergence of globalization and the parallel collapse of the Soviet bloc. Thus, religious irrationalism based on Judaism or Christianity is today praised by the media, as is also Saudi Arabian Islamism, or even Al Qaida Islamism – as long as it fights for the “right” causes, i.e. against communism in Afghanistan in the past, or against the anti-NWO movements in Libya or Syria at present. Although the term “Islamism” itself, as well as its nature as a political ideology, is controversial, my stand on Islamism is clearly based on my general stand against any kind of irrational ideology – which includes of course religion that expresses irrationality *par excellence*. Politics, in the classical sense of collective self-determination, can only be based on democratic rationalism, as expressed through genuine direct democracy (or I what I call Inclusive Democracy, as opposed to the travesty of democracy called representative “democracy”), and not on any kind of irrational beliefs, as I tried to show elsewhere.<sup>17</sup> In fact, whenever the decisions of even a traditionally anti-NWO Islamic movement like the Iranian movement were based on irrational belief, they were criminally wrong. An indication of this is what Ayatollah Khatami told a Friday prayer gathering in Tehran during the Egyptian uprising, in view of the foreseeable at the time taking over by the Muslim Brotherhood: “An Islamic Middle East is being formed. A new Middle East is being shaped around Islam, religion and religious democracy.”<sup>18</sup> In other words what matters, according to this view, is Islamism itself and not its stand towards the NWO of neoliberal globalization! Not surprisingly, the Iranians were soon to have a nasty surprise by Morsi and the MB in the Tehran conference of the non-aligned movement, as we shall see below.

In my view, Islamist movements must be supported by the Left, as it has always been the case in the past, as long as they are part of national liberation movements, or anti-New World Order movements. National liberation, which nowadays mainly takes the form of breaking with the NWO, is a precondition for any social liberation and the struggle for this goal should unite everybody wishing to fight for it, irrespective of sex, race, ethnic or cultural differences, including religious ones. However, neither national liberation nor, even more so, social liberation, can ever be achieved with the help of the very elites against whom both types of struggle are fought. Therefore, any Islamic movements

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<sup>17</sup> Takis Fotopoulos, “The Rise of New Irrationalism and its Incompatibility with Inclusive Democracy,” *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 4, Nos. 2/3, pp.1-49.

[http://www.democracynature.org/vol4/fotopoulos\\_irrationalism.htm](http://www.democracynature.org/vol4/fotopoulos_irrationalism.htm)

<sup>18</sup> James Reynolds, “Are uprisings a ripple of Iran in 1979?,” *BBC News* (3/2/2011).

cooperating with the transnational elite and its client regimes, in order to overthrow a non-client regime – even if it is an authoritarian one – are enemies of the peoples, as they put their religion above the struggle for national liberation and against the NWO, and, as such, should be treated accordingly by the struggling peoples and by the antisystemic Left. Of course, the degenerate "Left," which in fact does not fight for systemic change but only for human rights and "freedoms," does not also have anything to do with this struggle. This is why this "Left," indirectly, backed the criminal campaigns of the transnational elite against the Libyan and Syrian peoples when it supported the so-called "rebels" who were armed and financed by the transnational elite and its client regimes. The criminal role of this degenerate "Left" (which sometimes even claims to be "Marxist" or "anarchist"!) should therefore be revealed, as it clearly plays, either objectively, or sometimes even deliberately, the role of justifying ideologically the NWO and the transnational elite, as well as its wars against any resisting peoples.

### ***Why the Muslim Brotherhood was chosen as the main instrument of the New World Order in the Middle East?***

Going back to the Egyptian Islamists, the first issue with respect to their movement refers to what is exactly the nature of their movement and, related to it, why did the transnational elite trust them so much, so that they did not have any qualms about triggering the replacement of an autocratic client regime with a new form of client regime expressing Islamic "democratization" and based, mainly, on the Muslim Brotherhood. This issue is raised because the emergence of Islamic "democratization" in Egypt, clearly, did not happen by some sort of historic accident. It is obvious that the transnational elite (and particularly the US based part of it), had known very well, at least since 2004, who would take over in Egypt in case free elections of any sort were going to be allowed there. We should not forget that this was the year when Mubarak was forced by the US elite to allow a degree of freedom in the parliamentary elections and, consequently, the Muslim Brotherhood had elected more than half of its candidates in the areas it contested! But in fact, it was since 2005, as we saw in the last chapter, that the US campaign for "democracy" in Egypt began, a campaign which culminated with the election of Obama in the Presidency, who, even before his official inauguration, was busy organizing meetings with Egyptian activists of the Facebook youth at the end of 2008, with the explicit aim of "regime change."

However, to understand the nature of the Muslim Brotherhood movement we have to go back to its historical development, particularly in the post-1948 period. Historically, the movement, which was founded by Hassan al-Banna in 1928, in the aftermath of the 1919-20 revolution and the continuing struggle against the reactionary bloc (comprising the monarchy, the great landlords, and the rich peasants), was formed with the active support of the British embassy and the royal Palace (controlled by the British) and was inspired "by 'Islamist' thought in

its most backward 'Salafist' version of Wahhabism, as formulated by Rachid Reda – i.e. the most reactionary, antidemocratic and against social progress version of the newborn 'political Islam'.<sup>19</sup> The movement initially aimed simply to spread Islamic morals and good works, but soon became involved in politics, particularly in the fight to rid Egypt of British colonial control and cleanse it of all Western influence – although what they meant by this was cultural influence and not economic one as well! Their main aim has always been the Islamization of Egypt's political and cultural institutions and the promotion of sharia as the basis for legislation. This is summed up by its main slogan used worldwide: "Islam is the solution." After its launching in 1928, branches were set up throughout the country – each running a mosque, a school and a sporting club. As a result, also, of this social activity its membership grew rapidly so that, by the late 1940s, the movement is believed to have had as many as two million followers in Egypt, while its ideas had spread across the Arab world.

The Brotherhood has always made pragmatic alliances with regimes – those of King Farouk from 1936; the Free Officers under Nasser (who ousted Farouk in 1952); and Sadat from 1970 (who used the Brothers against the Nasserites and the left).<sup>20</sup> The tactical alliance with the Free Officers however was inevitably short lived as they had divergent political goals: the Muslim Brotherhood believed in the establishment of a Koranic state, whereas the Nasserite officers in a nationalist, secularist one. No wonder that a failed attempted assassination of Nasser in 1954 led to the brutal suppression of the Muslim Brotherhood and the imprisonment and sentencing to death of Sayyid Qutb, one of its leading ideologues, which led to the jihadist movement. A year after Qutb's death in 1966, Ayman al-Zawahiri, aged 16 at the time, set up a jihadist cell at his school and invited a few friends to join. In May 2011, Zawahiri became the leader of Al-Qaida, following the murder of Osama bin Laden by US Special Forces. In fact, according to Fawaz A Gerges,<sup>21</sup> "the birth of the jihadist movement cannot be understood without reference to this great clash between the Muslim Brotherhood and Nasser's forces."

The Brotherhood's relation with Western powers had started early on and even during the Second World War, the British viewed the Brotherhood as a possible counterweight against the secular nationalist party, the Wafd, and the communists.<sup>22</sup> But it was in the post-Second World War period, and particularly since 1946-1948, when two crucial events took place, almost at the same time, which marked the post-war period in the Middle East and the entire world:

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<sup>19</sup> Samir Amin, "2011: An Arab Springtime? Reflections from Egypt," *Europe solidaire sans frontières* (15/5/2011). <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article21911#top>

<sup>20</sup> See Alaa al-Din Arafat, "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood divides."

<sup>21</sup> Fawaz A Gerges, "This Brotherhood has a real sense of purpose," *The Independent* (7/2/2011).

<sup>22</sup> Jack Shenker & Brian Whitaker, "A rare glimpse into the world of the Muslim Brotherhood," *The Guardian* (9/2/2011).

- the beginning of the Cold War in 1946 and
- the establishment of the Zionist Israeli state in 1948 on occupied Palestinian land.

Both events and, particularly, the latter functioned as catalysts, in the aftermath of the humiliating defeat of Arab regimes at the hands of Zionists, for the emergence, on the one hand, of the secularist Arab nationalist movement (spearheaded, in Egypt, by the Free Officers movement under Nasser and, in Libya, by Colonel Gaddafi), and, on the other, the strengthening of the Islamist movement headed by the Muslim Brotherhood, which proclaimed that "the only way to restore the former glory of the Islamic world was to return to fundamentalist Islam."<sup>23</sup> At the same time, the needs of the Cold War first (and of the NWO at present) have led to the creation of an unholy alliance between Islamists and the West, through the client Gulf regimes. Here is how Lizzie Phelan describes the process:<sup>24</sup>

Money from Saudi Arabia helped sustain the movement when other Arab governments, especially Egypt's, moved against them. And thanks to the Cold War, the Muslim Brotherhood would draw energy from the global crusade against communism. Its combination of elite insider politics and underground violent militancy marked the true start of what we now call "political Islam." The Islamist regimes in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and Sudan that came to power beginning in the late 1970s were the direct result of the groundbreaking work done by Banna, Ramadan and their allies. (...) The strategists who build the NATO, Baghdad Pact, and CENTO alliances, the Rapid Deployment Force, and the U.S. Central Command attached extraordinary importance to securing the Gulf. (...) To defeat the nationalists, and to build a tier of nations aligned in opposition to the Soviet Union, the United States would reach out to the Islamic Right.

A large part of the Brotherhood's support rests on the welfare services, health clinics and computer training for young people that it provides. Yet, the economic policies themselves of the Muslim Brotherhood, at least since the mid 2000s, have been the usual mix of neoliberal globalization policies (i.e. support for privatization and gradually opening Egypt to global free trade), which were complemented by the ideology of globalization, namely, human rights and representative "democracy." In this sense, the Muslim Brotherhood was the perfect Egyptian candidate for the transnational elite, so that it could implement Egypt's "democratization" and its full integration into the NWO.

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<sup>23</sup> Lizzie Phelan, "History of the Muslim Brotherhood's collusion in Palestine" in Robert Dreyfuss's book *Devils Game: How the United States Helped Unleash Fundamentalist Islam* (Metropolitan Books, 2006/2008), pp. 58 – 64.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

As Samir Amin also stressed about the historical role of the Brotherhood:

The Muslim Brotherhood is committed to a market-based economic system of complete external dependence. They are in reality a component of the comprador bourgeoisie. They have taken their stand against large strikes by the working class and against the struggles of poor peasants to hold on to their lands. So the Muslim Brotherhood are “moderate” only in the double sense that they refuse to present any sort of economic and social program, thus in fact accepting without question reactionary neoliberal policies, and that they are submissive de facto to the enforcement of U.S. control over the region and the world. They thus are useful allies for Washington (and does the US have a better ally than their patron, the Saudis?), which now vouches for their “democratic credentials.”<sup>25</sup>

Finally, in view of the above about the history of the MB and its stand with respect to neoliberal globalization and the present huge campaign of the transnational and Zionist elites to redesign the Middle East political map, one could understand why there is an obvious (unholy) alliance between the Islamist winners on the one hand and the losers in the liberal camp who have been eliminated through the electoral process on the other. This, despite the fact that the direct flag carriers of ideological globalization are those who, through the Facebook Youth, the NGOs and so on, tried hard to control the uprising according to the principles of ideological globalization (see chapter 3). Here is how El Baradei accurately described this alliance:<sup>26</sup>

I predict the Islamists will embrace other political factions, support free markets and be pragmatic. It is time to set aside our differences. We need the strength of a unified Egypt: ensuring judicial independence, protecting media freedom and civil society, and tapping Egypt’s potential as an emerging market. With the lack of a democratic framework, I recently bowed out of the presidential race. I believe I can contribute more if I am not wading through the political muck and hope to help groom the youth that triggered the revolution so they can take over the leadership of the country in the next election. (...) Despite the ups and downs of the past year I believe with all my heart that our revolution will succeed.

In fact, ElBaradei knew very well that Egypt, left to MB and Salafists, was very much in safe hands (from the transnational and local elites’ point of view). As we saw above, both the MB and Salafists belong to the sort of Islamists who, historically, have never had anything to do with the anti-New World Order kind of political Islamism (as expressed e.g. by the Iranian regime), and have no

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<sup>25</sup> Samir Amin, “2011: An Arab Springtime? Reflections from Egypt,” *Europe solidaire sans frontières* (15/5/2011). <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article21911#top>

<sup>26</sup> Mohamed ElBaradei, “My year of hard-pounding in Egypt’s political muck,” *Financial Times* (7/2/2012).

objection at all to the full integration of Egypt into the NWO of neoliberal globalization and representative "democracy" – as long as they are left free to preach and practice their irrational beliefs, as all religious organizations all over the world do. Naturally, the elites are happy to let them do so, as long as they do not bother them in perpetuating a system securing the concentration of economic and political power in their hands! And this is exactly the case of the MB, which is not only an enthusiastic supporter of neoliberal globalization but has already showed that it can function as a client regime of the transnational and Zionist elites, with respect to their present systematic attempt to effect "regime change" in Syria – as it did also with respect to the massacre of the Libyan people by the same elites which it directly or indirectly supported. In fact, one of the main aims of the establishment of a new kind of client regimes based on Islamic "democratization" in both Tunisia and Egypt was exactly the facilitation of regime change in both Libya and Syria, which, unlike in the cases of Tunisia and Egypt, required external intervention to be effected. In this light, the present conflict between the secular front under Baradei and the Islamic front under Morsi is just an "internal affair," as far as the transnational elite is concerned, given that both the MB and many within the secular front (liberals, the middle classes, the Facebook Youth etc.) will serve its strategic and economic aims in the Middle East perfectly well. Thus, although a liberal regime would of course be preferable, the transnational elite accepts that, for the short and medium term, Egypt, like the rest of the client regimes in the area (the Tunisian as well as the newly added Libyan one, to be followed by the one planned for Syria) need to go through a transitional process of "Islamic democratization," so that they may become fully integrated into the New World Order of neoliberal globalization and representative "democracy".

As regards Salafists in particular, they seem to be even worse than the Muslim Brotherhood. As Benjamin Schett wrote in a significant recent article on Salafism/Wahhabism:

Wahhabi ideology serves U.S. interests for several reasons. Its followers' archaic perception of society makes them reject any kind of progressive social change. Therefore they are well equipped to push back socialist, secular or nationalist movements, whose independence-oriented policies are a threat to America's geopolitical agenda. Although Wahhabism certainly is not representative of the majority of Sunni Muslims, Wahhabi Muslims are Sunni extremists, which causes them to maintain an extremely hostile stance towards Shi'ite Islam.<sup>27</sup>

One could even go further and assume that one reason (though not the only one)

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<sup>27</sup> Benjamin Schett, "US Sponsored "Islamic Fundamentalism": The Roots of the US-Wahhabi Alliance," Global Research (7/9/2012). <http://www.globalresearch.ca/us-sponsored-islamic-fundamentalism-the-roots-of-the-us-wahhabi-alliance/>

for which the MB, through its affiliates in Syria and Libya, has directly or indirectly supported the criminal campaigns of the transnational elite against the peoples of these two countries, was exactly that it was well aware that its support for the crucial campaigns of the transnational and Zionist elites in Libya and Syria was a condition that it had to meet in order to be allowed by them to take power in Egypt. In other words, this was the only way in which an Islamist Egypt could avoid, for instance, the fate of Islamist Algeria, where Islamists were massacred by the transnational elite, through its proxy in the local army, exactly because their victory in the 1991 elections was not approved by them. In fact, in Algeria, the army intervened as soon as the Islamist victory became obvious when the Islamic Salvation Front won the first round of the country's first multi-party elections. In contrast, in Egypt, the army not only did not intervene to stop the Islamic victory but its leadership was also ousted immediately after it, in effect, by the US elite on which it was dependent. It will be hard to believe that it was just a coincidence that, a few weeks before Morsi's soft coup against the generals, Hilary Clinton was in Cairo, in her first visit to Egypt after the Morsi victory, and declared that the army should return to the barracks, "to a purely national security role!"<sup>28</sup>

Of course, the image promoted by the media of the transnational elite at the time was one of a strong new president who purged the army from pro-Mubarak elements but it is very surprising indeed that even experienced anti-Zionist Middle East analysts like James Petras, to whom I frequently referred in this book as one of the honourable exceptions in the Left today, would have fallen into the same trap not only crediting Morsi for purging the army from pro-Mubarak elements but even going as far as supporting the new client regime in Egypt for the sake of supporting the newly established "democratic" institutions, as a better alternative to the previous Mubarak regime. However, as regards the sort of "democracy" being established in Egypt at the moment, I hope that the present chapter will help in forming a more perceptive view on the matter, whereas as regards the risk of return of the previous regime, as I showed in the previous chapters, it is almost non-existent. Furthermore, considering the MB regime as a kind of involuntary hostage of the transnational elite (as if the MB in general and Morsi in particular have ever shown any significant divergence of views – or willingness to adopt alternative policies, as we shall see next – from those promoted by the transnational elite!) could well lead, as it did in this case, to what I consider a fundamental error, i.e. to call for the Left to support Morsi from an imaginary risk of an army takeover:

In the case of Egypt, secular liberals and leftists should have joined with the Morsi regime to oust the remnants of the brutal Mubarak regime. They should have supported the elected legislature, even while challenging Morsi's pacts with the IMF, the US, EU and Israel. Instead, secular liberals appear to agree with the regime in its reactionary socio-economic

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<sup>28</sup> Heba Saleh, "Clinton backs 'full transition' in Egypt," *The Financial Times* (15/7/2012).

policies.<sup>29</sup>

Naturally, the possibility of an army takeover cannot be ruled out – but for the opposite reasons than those mentioned by Petras. Given that, as I showed in the previous chapters, Mubarak would never have fallen had he been supported by the US-controlled Egyptian generals and that since his fall the army had plenty of opportunities to intervene (the last one being just a few months ago when the “strong” man Morsi carried out, supposedly single handed, a heroic soft coup against the army!), but it never did so, there are obviously other reasons that have to be examined in order to interpret the present situation in Egypt. In this framework, an army takeover could indeed take place in the future but only if the Islamic “democratization” model fails to contain popular anger against the policies of neoliberal globalization to be imposed by the transnational elite through the IMF and the EU, and not because the pro-Mubarak forces would attempt a return. The Mubarak model of client regime has been dead and buried since the “revolution” of January 2011 – apart perhaps from some remnants in the judiciary – when the transnational elite decided to oust Mubarak who was already politically bankrupt and replace this obsolete model of clientelism with a synchronised one based on Islamic “democratization” in the redesigned Middle East. Furthermore, the millions of poor, the unemployed and the marginalized would be hardly concerned about the risk of losing the supposed freedom that liberal “democracy” (particularly of the Islamic kind!) offers to them, as they are well aware that, as soon their struggle creates a real danger to the local and foreign elites, even this freedom will be effectively (and “legally”) undermined, through the various laws they have in their arsenal, on top of the most effective ever technology of state violence available to them, to protect public order. This is, for instance what the peoples in the peripheral European countries discovered in the last two years or so when every time they began revolting against the savage economic war launched against them by the local and foreign elites, then, in case they were protesting peacefully, their massive protests were simply ignored, whereas every time they had to resort to defensive collective violence against the samurai of the security forces they were violently suppressed. Needless to add that in the latter case nobody in the West (governments, mass media etc.) was the least concerned about these blatant cases of “regimes turning against their own peoples” – this being presumably a practice forbidden only to rogue regimes.

Of course there also many other indications about the real role of the MB, which clearly show that this role, far from being enforced by the transnational elite on the organization, it was in fact a voluntary decision by it. Thus, one of the first things Morsi did as soon as he took over was to reassure the transnational elite of his intentions, telling the *Wall Street Journal* that his foreign policy priority was a “strategic partnership” with the US, with the aim of gaining access to international

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<sup>29</sup> James Petras, “Egypt and Argentina: The Right-Left Alliance,” *Global Research* (10/12/2012). <http://www.globalresearch.ca/egypt-and-argentina-the-right-left-alliance/5314891>

credit markets and global legitimacy!<sup>30</sup> Similarly, he rushed to reassure the Gulf client states by dismissing as “delusional, slanderous and baseless” the suggestion that the Brotherhood had direct relations with Iran or Hezbollah, its Lebanese ally. Thus, as Morsi pledged immediately after he was elected: “We will never stand with the forces which threaten friendly countries in the Arabian Gulf”<sup>31</sup> (by which of course he meant the most reactionary regimes around, i.e. Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and the likes!). In fact, Morsi in his inauguration speech not only formally committed the Muslim Brotherhood to the Camp David Accords but also to the transnational elite’s campaign for regime change in Syria: “We emphasize the state of Egypt’s commitment to international treaties and agreements (...) Spilling the Syrian people’s blood has to stop. We will exert efforts to achieve that in the near future.”<sup>32</sup>

No wonder also that the Egyptian elite celebrated Morsi’s victory with a significant rise in the stock exchange index. After all, Morsi’s five-point plan for his first 100 days in office was clear: to deal with the problems of traffic, security, street cleanliness, bread and fuel!<sup>33</sup> This, in a country in which, as Seumas Milne, a liberal Left analyst, pointed out, about 40% of the population lives on less than two dollars a day, and the IMF is hovering in the wings with the kind of structural adjustment reforms that can only make things worse for those at the sharp end. Those include privatizations the Brotherhood has pledged to continue and expand. No wonder the MB won plaudits from US officials for saying “all the right things on the economic side,” despite its social programs.<sup>34</sup>

What is less self-explanatory is that the first formal congratulations to Morsi from abroad came from Hamas. Although this is not surprising given that Hamas is an offshoot of the Egyptian MB, it is still difficult to explain how Hamas, as a result presumably of its close links with the Egyptian MB, ended up supporting the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria that makes up a significant part of the anti-Assad armed insurrection, despite the huge (financial and military) help that Hamas and Palestinian resistance in general received from the Ba’athist regime all these years! In other words, Hamas, indirectly, supports now also the transnational and Zionist elites’ plans in the Middle East, which, in case they are successful in changing the non-client regimes in Syria and Iran with client ones, they will inevitably lead to a Zionist solution on the Palestinian issue! The present massive expansion of Israeli settlements which precludes any idea of a two-state solution should have given Hamas an idea of what this solution will be about, at the time

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<sup>30</sup> Abdel-Rahman Hussein & Julian Borger, “Tahrir cheers as Morsi named Egypt’s president,” *The Guardian* (25/6/2012).

<sup>31</sup> Ian Black, “Formal welcome, private fears,” *The Guardian* (26/6/2012).

<sup>32</sup> “President Morsi hails ‘new Egypt’ but faces challenges to authority,” *Russia Today* (30/6/2012). <http://www.rt.com/news/morsi-egypt-inauguration-army-constitution-121/>

<sup>33</sup> Abdel-rahman Hussein, “Morsi win calms stock market – now real battle begins,” *The Guardian* (26/6/2012).

<sup>34</sup> Seumas Milne, “Egypt’s revolution will only be secured by spreading it,” *The Guardian* (27/6/2012).

that the "fearless" Morsi and the MB gang do not even dare to break completely any diplomatic relations and demand from the UNSC to take real action against the racist Zionists, instead of the present verbal criticisms of Israel which are of course completely ignored by them. Furthermore, the Gaza incidents in August, which played a significant role with respect to the Islamist "coup" against the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), confirmed in an undisputed way the client nature of the Muslim Brotherhood regime and do not allow any scope for continuing Hamas misunderstandings on it. As Abayomi Azikiwe, director of Pan-African News Wire from Detroit rightly stated recently, "we're seeing that the siege on Gaza has become tighter than ever before"<sup>35</sup> i.e. what used to be considered by most peoples in the world as "the largest open-air prison in the world," which was created by Zionists and maintained with the support of the Mubarak regime, has become an even worse prison, thanks to the Muslim Brotherhood and Morsi!

Needless to add that Hamas's supposed military "victory," following the latest Zionist massacre in Gaza, and Morsi's related diplomatic "victory" (for which he was explicitly congratulated by the entire transnational elite and its media – although only implicitly by the Zionist elite, for obvious reasons) were just fiascos yet again, if not clear acts of treachery against the Palestinian people. Thus, Hamas's military victory consisted in the fact that it was shown to be capable of launching a few long-range missiles (which would best be described as more developed fireworks!) into the suburbs of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, giving Israel the chance to test its anti-missile system successfully. In the process, not only did Hamas had to pay a very high price in terms of the amount of Palestinian casualties it suffered vs. the minimal number of Israeli casualties suffered, but also the Zionists had the chance to destroy most of Hamas's infrastructure, rendering it incapable of launching any major offensive (even if it wanted to!) once the imminent "big battle" against Syria and Iran begins. At the same time, Morsi's diplomatic "victory" consisted in the fact that he negotiated a truce between the two sides, his big "achievement" being to get the Israelis to stop their offensive against Gaza, while at the same time forcing Hamas to abandon its right to resistance against the Zionist occupiers! At the same time, Morsi did not even dare to open the Gaza-Egypt border fully, so as to break the criminal imprisonment of the Gazan people from his side, let alone break diplomatic relations with Israel for its massacre in Gaza.

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<sup>35</sup> "Egypt new govt. risks losing support among working class: Analyst," Press TV (9/9/2012). <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/09/09/260633/egypt-hit-gaza-financial-move/>

## PART II: TOWARDS A NEW FORM OF A CLIENT REGIME

### *Islamic “democracy” and “Brotherhoodization”*

The very first acts of the presently all-powerful MB, under Morsi as president, were highly indicative of the sort of “democracy” Islamists had in mind.

The first case of a growing “Brotherhoodization” (as is called in Egypt the obvious attempt by MB to control the state’s institutions, i.e. the army, parliament, media, as well as the future constitution drafted by a committee selected by the Islamist majority in parliament) referred to the control of the media being established by Morsi, which often ended up with some blatant cases of attempted censorship. Thus, several journalists faced trial on the usual charge of “insulting the president,” including the long time nationalist activist and editor-in-chief of Egyptian weekly *Sawt Al-Omma*, Abdel-Halim Qandeel, as well as the editor-in-chief of weekly *Al-Fagr*, Adel Hamouda.<sup>36</sup> Strangely enough, as Tony Cartalucci<sup>37</sup> pointed out:

While similar actions around the world beget howling indignation from organizations including Freedom House, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and IFEX – not to mention the US State Department itself which underwrites each of these faux-human rights advocates – there is not only absolute silence regarding this assault on “freedom of expression,” but, instead, a collective chorus of support from the Western media, hailing Morsi’s increasingly despotic dismantling of Egypt’s checks and balances through an increasing aggressive consolidation of power, as a “step forward for revolution.”

The only reaction from the defenders of “democracy” in the “world community” (read transnational elite and its stooges) was the expression of “concern” by the State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland, and an Amnesty International statement, according to which “it is very disappointing that journalists continue to face prosecution in Egypt for their writing in spite of the ‘25 January Revolution’ and its hopes for change.” Of course, Amnesty International was much more energetic when it had to condemn similar activities by SCAF not to mention its raging against the Gaddafi and Assad regimes! Thus: “under the SCAF,” as *Egypt Independent* reported, “Amnesty International documented incidents of

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<sup>36</sup> “Egypt’s newspaper editors trial for insulting Morsi to begin Thursday,” *Ahram Online* (21/8/2013). <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/0/50921/Egypt/0/Newspaper-editors-trial-for-insulting-Morsi-to-beg.aspx>

<sup>37</sup> Tony Cartalucci, “West Celebrates as Dark Age Descends over Egypt,” *Land Destroyer* (13/8/2012).

<http://landdestroyer.blogspot.co.uk/2012/08/west-celebrates-as-dark-age-descends.html>

army troops and security forces raiding television studios reporting on crackdowns on demonstrations, and military prosecutors also summonsed and questioned journalists and others who publicly criticized the ruling military council."<sup>38</sup> In fact, it was because of the above mild reaction from the transnational elite and its organs, and of the growing indignation by journalists and novelists to the prospect of a pre-trial detention of the journalist, as ordered by the court, that Morsi had to intervene personally to pass a law banning the pre-trial detention of journalists. But, as human rights activist Gamal Eid pointed out, "we want a law that bans any form of detention in crimes related to the press and not only a bar on journalists' detentions pending trials."<sup>39</sup> And, of course, Morsi followed exactly the steps of Mubarak, as far as press freedom is concerned, when the Islamist-dominated upper house of parliament appointed new editors to several state newspapers!

Then, as Emad Gad, researcher at Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies, told *Ahram Online*, newly appointed Prime Minister Hisham Qandil recently assigned the Ministry of Information to a Brotherhood member, Salah Abdel-Maksoud. Thereafter, the Shura Council reshuffled the chief editors of state-owned newspapers, putting in place "either members of the Muslim Brotherhood or people with a similar line of thought."<sup>40</sup> In fact, media control has gone as far as having one of the new editors remove an entire opinion section and *Al-Akhbar*, a prominent state-owned newspaper, was published without opinion pages days after the new chief editor was appointed. Also when the new editors-in-chief were appointed, several Egyptian writers and journalists writing for independent newspapers left their columns blank, as a protest against what was seen as a Brotherhood attempt to control state owned media. Even some scholars of Al-Azhar (the Sunni world's religious authority based in Cairo) joined the protest, calling for freedoms and against what they described as the dictatorship of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Another incident of an attempted Brotherhoodization refers to the case where representatives of the Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions (EFITU) launched a campaign to press for the passage of a law protecting trade union freedoms before union elections in October, unveiling at the same time another campaign that would counter what they called "attempts to 'Brotherhoodize' the unions." Thus, it seems that the MB Manpower Minister Khaled al-Azhary preferred to hold the upcoming union elections under the old law, passed in 1976

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<sup>38</sup> "Egypt must uphold freedom of expression, halt prosecution of journalist," *Egypt News* (23/8/2012). <http://news.egypt.com/english/permalink/146450.html>

<sup>39</sup> "Egypt passes law banning pre-trial jail for journalists," *Egypt News* (23/8/2012). <http://news.egypt.com/english/permalink/146605.html>

<sup>40</sup> "Brotherhoodisation of Egypt claims are overstated, say experts," *Ahram Online*, (30/8/2012). <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/51568/Egypt/Politics-/Brotherhoodisation-of-Egypt-claims-are-overstated.aspx>

under Sadat, in effect annulling the trade unions conquest of independent from the state unions. As the EFITU statement rightly stressed, “Independent trade unions are one of the most important gains of the revolution because for the first time in more than 60 years workers are able to form unions.” As the same statement emphasised, the EFITU would direct all its strength to counter the Freedom and Justice Party’s attempts to dominate the labor movement and the “Brotherhoodization” of unions, while Kamal Abu Eita, head of the EFITU, added: “The current regime is similar to the former regime and does not want the freedom of trade unions. It wants to dominate the unions, but we will stand against Azhary until he issues a law on union freedoms.”<sup>41</sup>

But, the culmination of MB authoritarianism came with the anti-MB demonstration which was called by various opposition parties and organizations, both from the “Right” (i.e. supporters of the Mubarak regime) and the Left (supporters of Sabbahi, revolutionary socialists, communists and others). Then, as soon as the demonstration was called for August 24, a member of Al-Azhar’s fatwa committee (Egypt’s highest Islamic authority) made a statement that fighting participants in anti-Muslim Brotherhood demonstrations planned for 24 August was a religious obligation. During a seminar at the Diplomats’ Club in Cairo, Sheikh Hashem Islam accused people intending to take part in the anticipated protests of committing “a major treason,” adding the call: “Resist them; if they fight you, fight back, if they kill you, you are in paradise, if you kill them, there is no blood money.”<sup>42</sup> This was followed by a Twitter post by Essam al-Erian, the acting president of the Freedom and Justice Party (the political expression of Muslim Brotherhood), in which he accused Leftist *Egypt News*, parties of receiving funds from abroad, submitting to foreign powers and ignoring the role of religion in society!

Unsurprisingly, this provoked a furious reaction from the Left. Thus, Leftist activist Wael Khalil said, “The problem is not with the opinion expressed by Erian. The problem is that his statement coincides with Brotherhood campaigns against Hamdeen Sabbahi and Mohamed ElBaradei – and now the left as well. There is a trend within the Brotherhood to attack other factions, which is not good.”<sup>43</sup> Also, as Hossam El-Hamalawy a Revolutionary Socialist member told Al Ahram, he finds it “shocking coming from Essam El-Erian when the historic ties between the Brotherhood and the Gulf and others abroad are widely known.” Pointing to the irony of the Left being accused of receiving foreign funds, he stressed, “if there

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<sup>41</sup> “Independent trade unions demand union law before elections,” *Egypt News* (31/8/2012). <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/independent-trade-unions-demand-union-law-elections>

<sup>42</sup> “Al-Azhar cleric encourages fighting demonstrators, sparks controversy,” *Egypt Independent* (15/8/2012). <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/update-al-azhar-cleric-encourages-fighting-demonstrators-sparks-controversy>>

<sup>43</sup> “Tweet by Essam al-Erian provokes anger of leftists,” *Egypt Independent* (22/8/2012). <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/tweet-essam-al-erian-provokes-anger-leftists>

is any group in Egypt receiving foreign funding, then there is no doubt that the Muslim Brotherhood are one of those groups."<sup>44</sup>

As one could expect, the Americanized "revolutionaries," like the Union of Revolutionary Youth, condemned the demonstration and tried to defame it, as in a statement saying that the protest was called for by supporters of former Prime Minister and presidential candidate Ahmed Shafiq as a counter-revolutionary ploy, and accused the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces of backing the protest.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, another "revolutionary" movement, the Democratic Front of April 6 Youth Movement, announced that it would not take part in the "million-man march," as some of the organizers called it, warning those whom it described as seeking to stir up sedition in the country that the Egyptian people will not allow spreading sedition and evils in the country.<sup>46</sup> This, despite the fact that several of the groups that planned to take part in the protest claimed to oppose both military rule and the Brotherhood!<sup>47</sup>

At the same time, the Secretary General of the Muslim Brotherhood Mahmoud Hussein, in full knowledge that the date of the demonstration was chosen because it marks the burning down of the Brotherhood's offices back in the 1950s, issued a deliberately vague press statement, asserting its support for peaceful demonstrations as long as such rights and freedoms are exercised within the boundaries of the country's constitution and law, without causing damage to state institutions and facilities or to private property, adding ominously the vague threat "and without harming or hindering people's interests."<sup>48</sup> It was not therefore surprising that when even Sabbahi, who now leads the Popular Current movement, said that he would not after all join (presumably fearing that the government would declare his movement illegal), while many of the independent radical activists had second thoughts out of fear of a Brotherhood crackdown (even Yasser Ali, Morsi's spokesman, criticized the spreading of an atmosphere of intimidation against demonstrators calling it "unhealthy"<sup>49</sup>) the "million-man" demo idea became doomed and, in the event, the demonstration was much smaller than expected, in a general atmosphere of intimidation, with MB "activists"

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<sup>44</sup> "Egyptian leftists hit back after Brotherhood's anti-left statements," *Ahram Online/Egypt News* (23/8/2012). <http://news.egypt.com/english/permalink/146484.html>

<sup>45</sup> "Protest against Brotherhood raises more controversy," *Egypt Independent* (22/8/2012). <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/protest-against-brotherhood-raises-more-controversy>

<sup>46</sup> "April 6 Movement Says Will Not Participate in August 24 Protest," *Egypt News* (23/8/2012). <http://news.egypt.com/english/permalink/146462.html>

<sup>47</sup> "Egypt revolutionaries to steer clear of Friday's anti-Brotherhood rally," *Ahram Online/Egypt News* (23/8/2012). <http://news.egypt.com/english/permalink/146385.html>

<sup>48</sup> "We respect right to peaceful protest, demonstration: Egypt Brotherhood," *Egypt News* (23/8/2012). <http://news.egypt.com/english/permalink/146459.html>

<sup>49</sup> "Protecting peaceful demonstrations duty of State institutions: Egypt Presidency," *Egypt News* (23/8/2012). <http://news.egypt.com/english/permalink/146498.html>

stoning the demonstrators and chasing them out of Tahrir Square which they occupied, presumably under the protection of security forces. This is how an *Egypt Independent* reporter described the way in which Morsi “attacked Leftist demonstrators:<sup>50</sup>

Shortly afterwards, a small number of protestors – the aforementioned Progressive Youth Coalition and the Revolutionary Communist Party crowd – attempting to enter Tahrir through Talaat Harb street while chanting in favor of workers and farmers’ rights, were first blocked, and then threatened by members of the pro-Morsy crowd. “Take it from me, and get out of here,” one of the latter said to this reporter, “before you regret it.” Upon hearing *Egypt Independent*’s explanation, the man frowns, “there’s no media here.” A few minutes later, rocks are hurled at the Morsy opponents, much to the dismay of the curious onlookers and shopkeepers peering out from half-shuttered storefronts. (...) Clearly shaken by the aggression displayed towards her and her colleagues, Mona Abdel Rady, of the Central Committee of the leftist Tagammu’ Party, describes the tactics of the Morsy supporters as “pure terrorism. This country does not belong to the Muslim Brotherhood, or the Salafis, it belongs to all Egyptians. But this is all those people know – violence. You only need to look around you. They’re carrying sticks and stones and rocks and knives,” she pointed out. “What do we have except these two banners and some flags? And yet, we’re the ‘troublemakers’, supposedly.”

Yet, despite the climate of fear created by Islamists, tens of thousands of people took part in the demonstrations of August 24<sup>th</sup> all over the country. As RT accurately described it, “despite being smaller than the demonstrations that ousted the former regime, Friday’s rally in Cairo was the biggest so far, that the new Islamic rulers have faced.”<sup>51</sup> Needless to add that the mass media of the “world community” (i.e. of the transnational elite in the West) did not utter a word about these events, obviously, in order not to damage the “democratic” image of their protégés in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood and Morsi. At the same time, the “alternative” media of the liberal “Left” like *Counterpunch* were completely silent on the participation of radical Left supporters in the demonstration and talked only about supporters of the previous regime and liberals, following faithfully the Morsi line and that of the transnational elite that those calling for the anti-MB demo were mainly remnants of the Mubarak regime, including, at best, some liberals!:

Barely a month into his presidency, his opponents, which included not only SCAF and Shafiq supporters, but also anti-Islamic liberal and secular

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<sup>50</sup> “Tahrir, home for unity and fault lines,” *Egypt Independent* (25/8/2012).

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/tahrir-home-unity-and-fault-lines>

<sup>51</sup> “Tahrir troubles: Biggest rally yet against Egypt’s new rulers,” RT (25/8/ 2012).

<http://rt.com/news/protest-muslim-brotherhood-tahrir-527/>

groups, called for mass protests to oust him that were scheduled for August 24 under the theme "toppling the rule of the Brotherhood."<sup>52</sup>

Yet, this was not in fact an isolated incident, as similar was the fate of another demonstration called by organizations of the Left against the request from the MB government for an IMF loan, on the occasion of the visit of IMF's chairman Christine Lagarde to discuss the conditions of the loan. The protest also called (rightly) for a national economic policy based on independent industrial and agricultural development, i.e. for a program of self-reliance, which is the only way for a country today to break from neoliberal globalization.<sup>53</sup> However, with the state media controlled by MB and the private ones by the economic elites, which have every reason to perpetuate Egypt's dependence, whereas the "revolutionaries" had obviously no reason to attend it, the demonstration was small and the MB government felt free to continue the economic policies of the Sadat and Mubarak regimes: i.e. the policies of dependence on foreign loans (like the IMF loan, secured through the good services of USA<sup>54</sup>), foreign investment (Qatar, of all places, has been the only country so far to commit itself to invest a very significant amount, \$18b, on tourism etc) and foreign aid (Saudi Arabia) – giving a clear indication of who the backers are of the new regime.<sup>55</sup> As speakers on a Cairo conference on the IMF loan stressed, "the IMF loan is not just money that will be spent just like any other loan, but will be used in the same ways as before, to enact certain policies," (Wael Gamal). Needless to add that all speakers were unanimous in rejecting such a loan, pointing out to the stringent austerity package, including selling-off state assets and subsidies cuts, which Egypt would have likely to implement in order to qualify for loan instalments. Also, as Anders Lustgarten perceptively pointed out, the Arab uprising represented a "great Middle East beanfeast" for development banks looking to make profits and concluded:

The IMF, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, World Bank and International Finance Corporation, all of which have pledged assistance to a democratic Egypt, were "deeply involved in Mubarak era policies. They are not designing programmes to meet your needs," he claimed citing numerous examples of privatisation initiatives in post-

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<sup>52</sup> Esam al-Almin, "Egyptian Military Checkmated," *Counterpunch* (24-26/8/2012).

<sup>53</sup> Takis Fotopoulos, *Greece as a protectorate of the transnational elite: the need for an immediate exit from the EU and a self-reliant economy* (Athens: Gordios 2010) (in Greek).

<sup>54</sup> "US close to finalising \$1 billion debt relief deal with Egypt: Official," *Ahram Online* (4/9/2012). <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/3/12/51948/Business/Economy/US-close-to-finalising--billion-debt-relief-deal-w.aspx>

<sup>55</sup> "IMF's Lagarde in Egypt Wednesday to kick-start loan talks," *Ahram Online* (21/8/2012). <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/3/0/50916/Business/0/IMFs-Lagarde-in-Egypt-Wednesday-to-kickstart-loan-asp>

Soviet Eastern Europe which pledged development yet seemingly specialised in “transferring public wealth into private hands.”<sup>56</sup>

However, some sort of Front of the Left seems to be emerging lately “from below.” Thus, a new demo was called at the very end of August, by Revolutionary Socialists, the Socialist Popular Alliance Party, the Socialist Youth Union, the Tagammu Party (whose leader Saeed Abdel Aal said that the protest aims to unify leftist forces who are “the only forces that have an alternative project to ‘Brotherhoodizing’ the state”<sup>57</sup>) and other Left organizations. On the day of the demonstration, thousands of protesters gathered in Talaat Harb Square and kept chanting “Bread, freedom, social justice!” and insisting that “The revolution still continues.”<sup>58</sup> The demonstration was dominated by the Kefaya Movement, the Revolutionary Socialists and the Egyptian Communist parties, along with some independent activists and artists.<sup>59</sup> Although the demonstration was small, perhaps not attracting more than 5,000 people, it is significant that just a month or so after the Islamist takeover, when most of the people have not yet realized that they are about to see a continuation of the economic policies which led them to the 2011 uprising, the organizations which called for the demo, which are directly against the MB and indirectly against the Tahrir “revolutionaries,” could attract a significant number of people. Clearly, as the situation deteriorates in the forthcoming months and years and people start realizing that the problem is not to protect some rights within the system but to fight against the NWO of neoliberal globalization and for a self-reliant economy and society, this movement is bound to flourish, particularly if the Left organizations abandon their usual sectarianism and are prepared to create a popular front with Nasserites and the likes to fight for these demands.

In fact, the return of the masses to Tahrir square in December 2012 was not just on account of a conflict between Islamists and secularists, as the MB and the liberals in Egypt, together with the media of the transnational elite, have presented it. The demand for the cancellation of the Islamic constitution referendum (which goes as far as to abolish the very foundation of any democratic state, i.e. citizenship!)<sup>60</sup>, simply expresses the popular frustration

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<sup>56</sup> “Egypt campaigners launch new salvo against IMF loan,” *Ahram Online* (9/9/2012). <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/3/12/52400/Business/Economy/Egypt-campaigners-launch-new-salvo-against-IMF-loa.aspx>

<sup>57</sup> “Leftist forces to stage Friday protest against Brotherhood,” *Egypt Independent* (31/8/2012). <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/leftist-forces-stage-friday-protest-against-brotherhood>

<sup>58</sup> “Thousands demonstrate for implementation of revolution’s goals, slamming Muslim Brotherhood,” *Ahram Online* (1/9/2012). <http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/51747.aspx>

<sup>59</sup> Randa Ali, “Friday’s protest leaves activists divided,” *Ahram Online* (1/9/2012). <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/51769/Egypt/Politics-/Fridays-protest-leaves-activists-divided.aspx>

<sup>60</sup> See “Comparison of Egypt’s suspended and draft constitutions,” *BBC News* article on the identity of the state (30/11/2012). <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20555478?>

over the fact that effectively nothing has changed since the 2011 "revolution" as regards the socio-economic condition of weaker social groups (workers, small farmers, the self-employed in the service sector et al. who constitute the vast majority of the population), and that the new regime is simply concerned with Sharia law and similar irrationalities.

However, the liberal "Left," seems, on the surface, to be completely ignorant of all these developments and continues to support the myth that a revolutionary government is rising in Egypt, following the Tahrir "revolution." Thus, a recent article in *Counterpunch* can only be interpreted as a pure piece of propaganda for Morsi, in its high appreciation of his "efficiency," "honesty" and "shrewdness" in organizing his counter-coup against the SCAF under Tantawi!<sup>61</sup> It is no wonder that the article "forgot" the real Left in Egypt which I briefly described above, and concluded: "With the exceptions of Mubarak's remnants his actions were overwhelmingly approved by Egyptians from diverse political, ideological, and pro-revolution groups."<sup>62</sup> In fact, *Counterpunch*, following the transnational elite's line, continued to expand on the same theme even after Morsi and the MB had shown their real intentions of imposing an Islamic pseudo-democratic regime as the new form of client state adopted by the transnational elite. Thus, the conclusion reached by this "Left" journal is in fact exactly the same as the one reached by the main media of the transnational elite, i.e. that "the best course of action might be to accept Vice President Makki's proposal to reach a compromise on the few disputed articles in order to bring about a consensus"<sup>63</sup> — a conclusion ignoring the fact that this is not a matter of just changing one article here and another there, but of changing the whole spirit of the constitution which has been transformed from one based on Arab nationalism and secularism (as was the 1971 constitution drafted while Nasserism was still dominant in Egypt) to one based on a "democratic" form of Islamism.

But let us see in more detail the kind of domestic and foreign policies implemented so far by the MB, so that we may better appreciate their role as the main instrument of the New World Order in Egypt — and beyond.

### ***Muslim Brotherhood's foreign policy***

Starting first with Morsi's and the MB's foreign policy, there is little doubt so far that it is a completely clientelistic policy with respect to the transnational and Zionist elites, despite the deceiving rhetoric of MB and Morsi, which is uncritically adopted (to say the least!), by the liberal "Left." Thus, one point particularly stressed by both the *Counterpunch* article and also by a US-Afghanistan commercial think-tank based in USA (strangely hosted by RT!) is about the

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<sup>61</sup> Esam al-Almin, "Egyptian Military Checkmated," *Counterpunch* (24-26/8/2012).

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Esam al-Amin, "In Egypt: When Democracy is not an Option," *Counterpunch* (7-9/12/2012).

relations that supposedly Morsi may intend to develop with respect to Iran and China. Thus, according to *Counterpunch*<sup>64</sup>:

President Morsi recently extended an extremely warm welcome to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad when the two met last week during the Islamic Conference in Saudi Arabia. He subsequently announced a visit to China and Iran at the end of August despite the U.S. public displeasure over the visit. (...) On Aug. 23, the *New York Times* reported that the U.S. and Israel were extremely concerned about such overtures between Tehran and Cairo and that such concerns will be at the top of the agenda when Morsi visits Washington at the end of September.

Similarly, according to Michael Hughes, foreign policy strategist at the Washington-based New World Strategies Coalition, a USA based US-Afghan think tank: "Now President Mohamed Morsi is off to China next week seeking investment, which sends a clear message that he is trying to rebalance, shifting away from the West (...) in the long term [the Egyptians] want to get better with China, who can fill the gap so that they don't have to rely on the West anymore."<sup>65</sup>

Of course, all this belongs to the area of science fiction. Morsi simply travelled to China with the hope of attracting some Chinese investment to the almost bankrupt Egyptian economy (as Greece's Papandreou had also done before him, despite the fact that Greece is a perfect client regime of the transnational elite!), on top of the cash infusions he had already received from the Gulf states (Qatar, Saudi Arabia) and USA, and indeed he seems to have succeeded, according to reports, to sign investment agreements of about \$5bn.<sup>66</sup> Morsi's stand at the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Tehran proved this point but also disproved another Hughes' "discovery" according to which:

"The unspoken link here is Israel," Hughes said, explaining that Egypt can leverage its relationship to put pressure on Israel to stop this loose talk about bombing Iran. "Here's the connection, for Morsi starts looking like a geopolitical genius. If he can pull this off, if he can make Israel to step back with the whole 'bombing Iran' thing – that would be pretty amazing," Michael Hughes said. "After all, if Egypt finds Iran as a partner they don't have to rely on the US or Israel, and they can offset and counterbalance the Gulf monarchies."<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> "Iran and Egypt going to offset Saudi and US in Mid-East," *Russia Today* (25/8/2012).

<http://rt.com/news/egypt-rebalance-east-hughes-535/>

<sup>66</sup> "Morsy scores US\$4.9 bn in investments on China trip: Spokesman," *Egypt News* (30/8/2012).

<http://news.egypt.com/english/permalink/148389.html>

<sup>67</sup> Op. cit. "Iran and Egypt going to offset Saudi and US in Mid-East."

Yet, in fact, neither Morsi nor MB had anything of the sort in mind, as it was shown by their reaction to the Sinai incident, their strong commitments to Camp David, their full support to the criminal "rebels" of Syria and so on. In fact, to clear any remaining doubts, the Egyptian presidency rushed, even before Morsi had begun his trip to China and Iran, to give the required "explanations" to the transnational elite. Thus, according to a report in *Egypt Independent*:

Egyptian President Mohamed Morsy has no immediate plans to restore ties with Iran, his spokesperson said in comments published Saturday ahead of a landmark visit to Tehran later this month for a Non-Aligned Movement summit, AFP has reported. "The matter [of restoring diplomatic ties] is out of the question at this stage," Yasser Ali told the Saudi-owned newspaper *As-Sharq al-Awsat* in an interview also carried by Egyptian media. Morsi will spend only four hours in Tehran on 30 August, long enough to hand over the presidency of the Non-Aligned Movement to the Islamic republic, Egypt's state-owned *Al-Ahram* newspaper reported. The Egyptian president will stop in Tehran on his way back from a 36-hour visit to China, the country he chose for his first major international outing, *Al-Ahram* added.<sup>68</sup>

This was in reply to a comment by Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi who said in an interview,<sup>69</sup> published a few days earlier, that Iran and Egypt are moving towards restoring diplomatic relations, which were severed more than three decades ago, following the Islamic revolution in Iran, to protest against Egypt and Israel agreeing on their 1979 Camp David Accords! In fact, Morsi, to dispel any remaining Iranian or Chinese doubts, at the Non-Aligned meeting in Tehran, made a very hostile statement against the Assad regime (and indirectly full in favour of the so called "rebels" in Syria), which even forced the Syrian delegation to walk out of the meeting – in full knowledge that both the Iranian hosts of the meeting and the Chinese delegation would very much disapprove of his statement. This is how the *New York Times* described Morsi's statement, (which of course the flagship of the transnational elite fully endorsed): "With the Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, sitting beside him, Mr. Morsi spoke of an "oppressive regime" in Syria and said the opposition should unite in its effort to unseat President Bashar al-Assad."<sup>70</sup> This was followed by a report in the *London Times*, according to which, "Mr Morsi's forthright comments on Syria – made just two weeks after he secured his powerbase at home by sweeping out

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<sup>68</sup> "Egypt-Iran ties off the table for now, FM's discuss situation in Syria," *Egypt Independent* (25/8/2012). <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/egypt-iran-ties-table-now-fms-discuss-situation-syria>

<sup>69</sup> "Iran, Egypt move to restore diplomatic ties: Salehi," *France 24 News* (21/8/2012). <http://www.france24.com/en/20120821-iran-egypt-move-restore-diplomatic-ties-salehi>

<sup>70</sup> Thomas Erdbrink and Rick Gladstone, "Egypt's Morsi Pushes for End of 'Oppressive Regime' in Syria," *New York Times* (30/8/2012).

powerful generals who had been close to the ousted president, Hosni Mubarak – indicate that he is trying to carve out a role as the leader of the Arab Spring.”<sup>71</sup>

The *Times* report is particularly significant because it gives indirectly a good idea about the true nature of “Arab Spring,” which is very close to the analysis of this book. In fact, it is clear now that Morsi went to the meeting with the aim to express the solidarity of Egyptian “revolutionaries” to the criminals taking part in the Syrian armed insurrection. Morsi himself said at the meeting that his own election was the result of the same Arab Spring protest movement that triggered the revolt against Assad in Syria.<sup>72</sup> In fact, the analyst of the international liberal “Left” flagship, the *Guardian*, was even more blunt!<sup>73</sup>

(Morsi) gave an uncompromising speech that could have come straight from Hillary Clinton’s playbook. (...) Morsi’s intervention will encourage Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states in their active support for the Syrian uprising. It may, in time, foster an increasingly interventionist, united Arab front against Bashar al-Assad’s regime, as happened in Libya after the Arab League turned against Muammar Gaddafi. Given the myriad pre-existing tensions between the Sunni Muslim Gulf states and predominantly Shia Muslim Iran, the development of such a front would logically serve to further restrain Tehran’s ambitions.

On the other hand, the comments on the matter by significant Middle East analysts like Mustafa Ellabbad, director of Al-Sharq Centre for Regional and Strategic Studies and the journalist and broadcaster Neil Clark are enlightening. According to the former, the potential for Iran-Egypt ties should not be overestimated, since Iran cannot serve as “strategic partner” to Egypt, given that strategic partnerships require harmonious political systems and common goals and values, which are non-existent in this case. As he put it, “Iran-Egypt relations might have a new framework and new terminology while largely remaining the same. Egypt might play new roles, but the quality of these roles will be bridled by Egypt’s strategic partnerships with Saudi Arabia, the US and Israel.”<sup>74</sup> Neil Clark was even more revealing, aptly describing Morsi’s motives behind his stand at the meeting of non-aligned nations, which proved beyond any doubt that he and the Muslim Brotherhood function as stooges of the transnational elite:

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<sup>71</sup> James Hider, “Syria summit walkout as Egypt’s new leader supports rebels,” *The Times* (1/9/2012).

<sup>72</sup> “US welcomes UN and Egyptian criticism of Iran and Syria,” *AFP* (30/8/2012).  
[www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iyvtmOA7hXeq9-500MIG0f81HcUA?docId=CNG.ffa46a17e4a24172cdb19bfa8da68ae7.d51](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iyvtmOA7hXeq9-500MIG0f81HcUA?docId=CNG.ffa46a17e4a24172cdb19bfa8da68ae7.d51)

<sup>73</sup> Simon Tisdall, “Unpredictable Morsi speaks for the world on Syria, but how will the world respond?,” *The Guardian* (31/8/2012).

<sup>74</sup> Dina Samir, “Iran rapprochement: Prospects and challenges,” *Ahram Online* (29/8/2012).  
<http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/51448.aspx>

I think it's all part of the plan to go there and sabotage the summit. A lot of people were very naïve about Egypt. They thought there was going to be a meaningful change in Egypt's foreign policy after what happened last year, but it's continuing. It's more of the same. I think that's part of the game. The US will be very pleased with what Morsi said.<sup>75</sup>

And indeed, the US State Department congratulated Morsi publicly, as the French Press Agency (AFP) describes its enthusiastic reaction:

US State Department spokesman Patrick Ventrell hailed Morsy's stern slap down of Bashar al-Assad's Syrian regime, which caused the Syrian delegation to walk out of a session the Tehran summit in anger. "They are very helpful comments. They are very clear, very strong. Really strong and clear statement by President Morsy, obviously made in Tehran," he said, suggesting the remarks had more power for having been made in Iran. "His comments in support of the Syrian people were very clear and we share Egypt's goal to see an end to the Assad regime and an end to the bloodshed and a transition to a democratic Syria that respects human rights."<sup>76</sup>

In fact, Morsi had the nerve to compare the genuine popular revolution against a truly reactionary and criminal regime like that of the Shah of Iran with the armed rebellion of mostly foreigners recruited by the secret services of the transnational elite, as well as of Islamic fundamentalists recruited by such "progressive" regimes as that of Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Thus Morsi's spokesman quoted him telling Ahmadinejad:

"The public opinion in the Arab region believes that Iran's support of the Syrian regime distances it from the Arab world." He also reminded Ahmadinejad that the Arab people sided with the Iranian people when the Shah attacked them with tanks. Morsy was likely referring to the crackdown on demonstrators by Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi in 1978, during the demonstrations that eventually toppled him.<sup>77</sup>

Obviously, an a-historical comparison of such a dimension could only be made either by an idiot or somebody playing a completely different role from the one he claims to play, and Morsi is not an idiot!

Needless to add that the pseudo-revolutionaries of Tahrir Square also congratulated Morsi with Engy Hamdy of the April 6 Youth Movement stating that

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<sup>75</sup> "We can't take Morsi at face value," *Russia Today* (30/8/2012). <http://rt.com/news/iran-summit-nuclear-syria-969/>

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> "Morsy and Ahmadinejad did not discuss relations, embassy at summit," *Egypt Independent* (1/9/2012). <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/morsy-and-ahmadinejad-did-not-discuss-relations-embassy-summit>

“the speech proved Morsy has a vision shaped by revolutionary demands” and other liberal leaders and human rights activists and the like taking a similar stand.<sup>78</sup> At the same time, Egyptian Islamists of every persuasion, from MB supporters up to Salafists, called their supporters to the airport to welcome Morsy and to show their support for his Tehran speech!<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, the night before an Arab League meeting at its headquarters in Cairo was expected to discuss the latest developments in Syria, “activists” (presumably MB and pseudo-revolutionaries of Tahrir), attempted to storm the Syrian embassy in Cairo to replace the national flag there with a Syrian rebel one, as Reuters reported!<sup>80</sup> Finally, it is hardly surprising that the liberal opposition to Morsi follows exactly the same policy on Syria. Thus, Mussa, the ex-head of the Arab League and one of the liberal leaders was very clear in his support for the Syrian “revolutionaries”:

Things will come to an end by the mere fact that the people had already voiced their opposition to the government [of Syria]. And they will continue to do so – they paid a lot – heavy price for that. And therefore those who believe that they can maintain the status quo are really mistaken. And their mistake will affect the fate of so many people in Syria and in the Arab countries.<sup>81</sup>

### ***Muslim Brotherhood’s domestic policy: neoliberal globalization with a “human” face***

However, it is not only the foreign policy of Morsi and the MB that is indicative of their true role. His first steps on domestic policies with respect to workers’ strikes and industrial action, including demonstrations, confirm the client nature of his regime. First, as a good neoliberal manager, he declared immediately after his coup against SCAF under Tantawi that “now we must push for production and investment. We have no doubt our dreams will be realised” adding that “security forces would not tolerate protesters who blocked roads or committed any other actions that would impact productivity.”<sup>82</sup> Then, he proceeded to action. The technocrat he appointed as prime minister, Hesham Qandil, held talks at the end of August with leaders of the Egypt Trade Union Federation (ETUF) to discuss a plan to halt workers’ protests and strikes at all production sites for a year (as his Minister of Manpower and Immigration Khaled al-Azhary said at a press

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<sup>78</sup> “Morsys speech in Tehran angers Syria, but crowd welcomes him back home,” *Egypt Independent* (30/8//2012). <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/update-morsy-s-speech-tehran-angers-syria-crowd-welcomes-him-back-home>

<sup>79</sup> “Egypt activists hail Morsi’s swipe at Assad at NAM summit,” *Ahram Online* (30/8/2012). <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/51680/Egypt/Politics-/Egypt-activists-hail-Morsis-swipe-at-Assad-at-NAM-.aspx>

<sup>80</sup> “Police tear gas activists attacking Syrian embassy in Cairo,” *Chicago Tribune* (4/9/2012). [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-09-04/news/sns-rt-us-syria-crisis-embassy-egyptbre883133-20120904\\_1\\_syrian-city-tim-pearce-syrian-embassy](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-09-04/news/sns-rt-us-syria-crisis-embassy-egyptbre883133-20120904_1_syrian-city-tim-pearce-syrian-embassy)>

<sup>81</sup> “Amr Moussa: The changes we wanted after the revolution have not happened,” *Russia Today* (10/12/2012). <http://rt.com/news/interview-amr-moussa-egypt-revolution-749/>

<sup>82</sup> Abdel-rahman Hussein, “Egypt military bows to Morsi’s orders,” *The Guardian* (14/8/2012).

conference), with the aim to increase production and boost the economy.<sup>83</sup> This, in a country with 40% of its people living below the poverty line and with high unemployment and (consequently) emigration rates! Furthermore Muslim Brotherhood did not stop with general threats against workers but proceeded with more concrete threats. Thus, the Centre for Trade Union and Workers' Services (CTUWS) accused the Freedom and Justice Party of pressuring workers at the Nile Spinning and Weaving Company in Sadat City to end their strike against the dismissal of 34 of their colleague, threatening them that the security forces would forcibly end the strike! All this, because Nile Spinning and Weaving Company workers have been on strike for three months demanding regular pay rises, social benefits and food allowances as well as the rehiring of the sacked workers.<sup>84</sup>

No wonder that the MB government announced also that it is preparing a new emergency law to replace the hated old emergency law in force under Mubarak. Although, following a storm of criticism after the announcement, Prime Minister Qandil seemed to be backtracking, yet, he said he agreed with the interior minister that certain steps must be taken to restore security in the streets, while in a meeting with security leaders Interior Minister Ahmed Gamal Eddin said that security efforts will continue to intensify, singling out those who obstruct the work of state facilities and roads, while Qandil warned that the Interior Ministry will arrest anyone who blocks roads, as such an act is an assault on the freedom of other citizens. He added that anyone convicted of this crime would be sentenced according to the penal code, which stipulates three years in prison.<sup>85</sup>

Finally, under the usual pretext of "tourist development," the MB did not have any qualms even to restrict demonstrations at the symbolic place of the "revolution": Tahrir Square! This is how an obviously deceptive press announcement revealed the MB plans to restrict the right to demonstrate at this emblematic place – something that even to Mubarak was inconceivable:

A plan to develop Tahrir Square will be submitted to Prime Minister Hesham Qandil next month, said Local Development Minister Ahmed Zaki Abdeen. The plan will involve the Tourism Ministry, along with the Local Development Ministry, and will include the allocation of peaceful

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<sup>83</sup> "Egypt PM meets union heads to discuss labor strikes," *Egypt News* (24/8/2012).

<http://news.egypt.com/english/permalink/146772.html>

<sup>84</sup> "Trade union criticises FJP members for threatening striking workers," *Ahram Online* (28/8/2012). <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/51470/Egypt/Politics-/Trade-union-criticises-FJP-members-for-threatening.aspx>

<sup>85</sup> "Cabinet will not recreate Emergency Law: Egyptian PM," *Egypt News* (30/8/2012).

<http://news.egypt.com/english/permalink/148539.html>

demonstration areas that do not disrupt traffic and which are also located away from the landscaping areas.<sup>86</sup>

Of course, MB had their reasons to take preventive action against strikes, and social unrest in general, as they are well aware about what is going to follow the neoliberal policies they are about to implement. Thus, in Morsi's first speech following the ejection of Tantawi and Anan, many references affirmed his commitment to developing the private sector and encouraging greater private investment, whereas Khairat El-Shater, deputy head of the Muslim Brotherhood, proposed three ways to deal with the current financial and economic crisis: taking loans, opening the market for foreign and Arab investment, and better use of the country's resources!<sup>87</sup>

Furthermore, the agreement on an IMF loan, which the Islamist FJP party, backtracking on its previous decision, has just accepted, will simply institutionalize these policies. Yet, back in April 2012, under the interim government of prime minister Kamal El-Ganzouri, the FJP members of parliament in the now-dissolved parliament unanimously rejected a similar IMF loan, arguing that the economic reform programme attached to the loan did not include proposals to improve public security, reduce poverty or provide the revenue to raise wages!<sup>88</sup> However, as it is standard IMF practice under neoliberal globalization, the first condition to be imposed on the MB government, for the IMF loan to be granted, is further liberalization of the economy, so that it could become "competitive." This means cutting the budget deficit and therefore drastically diminishing food subsidies for the poor, introducing even greater labor "flexibility," so that wages can be kept at the minimum possible, abolishing subsidies to the domestic industry (either in the industrial or the agricultural sector, so that the budget deficit is reduced and at the same time the economy becomes more "liberalized") and so on. It is in view of these forthcoming developments that the MB government attempts at present to check any serious industrial action.

In fact, as regards the cut of production subsidies, the MB government has already announced its intentions. First, it announced that it will phase out energy subsidies for heavy industry.<sup>89</sup> Governments in Egypt had traditionally supported existing cement ventures by providing the fuel they required to generate electricity, at prices significantly lower than market rates. In their quest to reduce the budget deficit, consecutive Egyptian governments have announced plans to slash this costly subsidy. In fact, the present budget recommends the abrogation of all fuel subsidies for energy-intensive industries by the end of the 2012/13

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<sup>86</sup> "Minister-Demonstration areas will be designated in Tahrir," *Egypt News* (8/9/2012). <http://news.egypt.com/english/permalink/150874.html>

<sup>87</sup> See "Brotherhoodisation of Egypt claims are overstated, say experts."

<sup>88</sup> "Egypt Brotherhood's party backtracks; tacitly approves IMF loan," *Egypt News* (27/8/2012). <http://news.egypt.com/english/permalink/147487.html>

<sup>89</sup> "Egypt govt to phase out energy subsidies for heavy industry: Minister," *Egypt News* (27/8/2012). <http://news.egypt.com/english/permalink/147532.html>

fiscal year, given that fuel subsidies make up 48 per cent of Egypt's total subsidy bill, which amounts to LE (Egyptian pounds) 148.5 billion, including food subsidies. In general, subsidies contribute almost one third of total state expenditures. One could imagine what will happen to the prices of electricity and energy in general paid by workers, farmers and generally low income groups, whereas their wages will be mostly frozen. And all this, apart from the fact that local cement factories and small industries will be hardly hit by any increases in the price of energy and they will become uncompetitive, opening the road for cheaper imports and the destruction of whatever is left of local industry. However, this is what neoliberal globalization is all about and the Islamist government is committed to it, as long as Islamists are left free to pray, even if they are unemployed or hungry!

The effects of neoliberal globalization are shown even more clearly in the agricultural sector. As we saw in ch. 9, Nasser's 1952 tenancy law had enforced a policy of redistributing land to small farmers with landowners at the time not allowed to own more than 500 feddans, an amount subsequently reduced to 50 feddans (1 feddan = 1.038 acres). Then, in May 1971, just a year after Nasser's death, Sadat launched a "rectification revolution" and "de-Nasserisation" process, while in June 1974, he passed a law cancelling all sequestration operations under the decrees of 1961. The legislation provided for the return of 60,000 hectares to their former owners, under the fierce resistance of poor farmers. Then, the Mubarak law of 1992 (the "Owners and Tenants Law") attempted to liberalize agricultural land by selling it at high prices, while stipulating that all tenants must eventually return the arable land to its original owners, completely reversing Nasser's 1952 law. As a result, approximately one million Egyptian families lost their land after the law was enacted in 1997, ultimately affecting some six million farmers and leading to an exponential rise to the price of land. No wonder that, as it is reported, in some villages today, land prices had increased by some 1200 per cent over the same period!

As Basheer Saqr, veteran activist for farmers' rights and founder of the Farmers Solidarity Committee (an initiative launched in 2005 to work towards ensuring these rights) recently argued, "these factors have all served to strip the Egyptian farmer of his land, and thus his identity."<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, as he stressed, Sadat in the late 1970s opened the door to foreign companies (e.g. Monsanto, the multinational agricultural-biotechnology corporation) that produce and market agricultural goods, which came at the expense of their locally produced counterparts. Thus, Egyptian farmers by becoming dependent on foreign seeds, were prevented from achieving self-sufficiency – the precondition for neoliberal globalization to work. Also, Mubarak and his notorious agriculture minister,

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<sup>90</sup> "Farmers rights advocate challenges Egypt post-Mubarak agriculture policy," *Ahram Online* (27/8/2012). <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/51319/Egypt/Politics-/Farmers-rights-advocate-challenges-Egypt-s-postMuba.aspx>

Youssef Wali, spearheaded several agricultural reforms pushed for by the IMF and the World Bank, among which was the importation by the state of large amounts of carcinogenic pesticides, which led to a health crisis throughout the country.

As a result of this process of liberalization in agriculture pursued by the two client regimes succeeding Nasser (under Sadat and Mubarak), as Basheer Saqr pointed out, Egypt's Fellahin, or small farmers, who were once considered the backbone of Egyptian self-sufficiency, have over the last four decades become increasingly imperilled due to a number of debilitating internal and external factors. Even worse, despite last year's (2011) January 25 Revolution, Egypt's fellahin have remained largely marginalized, remaining in a position of financial vulnerability and dependency. And then Saqr meaningfully adds:<sup>91</sup>

The revolution was largely a revolution of the cities, mainly Cairo, Alexandria and Suez. The countryside didn't really take part in it. No leadership emerged to mobilise [revolutionary] forces in the countryside. (...) Not only has the current government adopted the same economic policies of the former regime, but the Muslim Brotherhood – from which President Morsi hails – has for decades been hostile to farmers' core demands

Most importantly, as Saqr pointed out, the Brotherhood opposes the notion of land redistribution, which it believes contradicts the tenets of Islamic law. Therefore, many Brotherhood members support Mubarak's reactionary Law 96/1992! Unsurprisingly, Saqr drew the crucial conclusion that "sooner or later, policies must be carried out to provide Egypt's farmers with the guidance they need to ensure self-sustainability – for the farmers themselves and for the nation at large."

Clearly, Saqr will soon realise that the MB government was selected by the transnational and local elites to do exactly the opposite: to fully integrate Egypt into neoliberal globalization and lead to the destruction of any possibility for self-sufficiency!

### ***Egypt as a client "democratic" state***

It is clear that following the MB's soft counter-coup and the "modernization" of SCAF, the new regime based on Islamic "democratization" would primarily aim at meeting the needs of the transnational and local elites, with the indirect help of the "revolutionary" forces (liberals, Facebook Youth, NGOs and the rest), who at the moment have been assigned the role of the unofficial "opposition" – on behalf of the transnational elite, of course! This will inevitably lead to the full integration of Egypt into the New World Order of neoliberal globalization and representative "democracy." However, the very serious socio-economic problems which led to

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

the mass uprising of 2011, following its triggering by the "revolutionaries," obviously, won't go away but instead are expected to get worse.

Thus, as even liberal academics like Nathan Brown, professor of political science and international affairs at George Washington University stressed,<sup>92</sup> the Brotherhood's program "focuses much of its attention on good governance, the rule of law, the provision of social services, and an economic policy that owes more to the Washington consensus than to 7th-century Arabia." So, despite its Islamic rhetoric about Zionist Israel, as the same observer points out, even if the Brotherhood wishes to "renegotiate" the peace treaty with Israel, the Zionists will not be prepared to make anything more than cosmetic changes to it. Similarly, despite MB's deep and emotional opposition to the blockade on Gaza, "it has also effectively told its cousins in Hamas that their cause will have to wait." Therefore, as Brown notes, the real question is "how effective it can be in its program when it is faced with crushing economic problems, a feisty set of public sector workers, and a public that has been fed the belief that ousting dishonest and corrupt leaders is enough to lead to immediate economic improvements."<sup>93</sup>

This is a crucial question, particularly if we take into account that, as the results of the first round showed, where the Islamist candidates lose ground, it is the Nasserite Sabahi that wins. This happened for instance in Alexandria, where the two Islamist candidates, Abul Fotouh and Mohamed Morsi, managed only 37% between them and the winner, as we saw, was the Nasserite Hamdeen Sabahi. It happened also in Cairo areas like in the sprawling Cairo neighborhood of Imbaba – known as the "Islamic emirate of Imbaba" in the early 1990s – where Hamdeen Sabahi also came out as the winner. These trends could only mean that many of the voters for the Islamist parties, who were attracted to them in the past more because of their resistance to the Mubarak regime, rather than because of the religious nature of their parties, and as soon as they become disillusioned with them (in fact pretty soon when they will discover that their economic policies are almost identical to those of Sadat and Mubarak!) they will turn to Nasserite parties, rather than to just another variation of the previous regimes. This is also indirectly confirmed by Nathan Brown,<sup>94</sup> who pointed out that with the higher echelons of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood oriented firmly towards a neoliberal economic program, despite popular demands for social justice, a significant proportion of the organization's followers – and its electoral base – could be ripe for fragmentation in the medium and long term.

Finally, this is also what historical evidence points to, as in many countries, including Morocco and even some Gulf countries, rival political forces are

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<sup>92</sup> Nathan Brown, "A Brotherhood win would resonate far beyond Egypt," *The Guardian* (28/5/2012).

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Jack Shenker, "A more nuanced picture than at first sight," *The Guardian* (26/5/2012).

outflanking the Brotherhood when it comes to attracting the urban and rural poor. As Brown stressed: “we could well see something similar happening in Egypt, with working class support siphoning off to Salafists or even to independent labor movements.”<sup>95</sup> This becomes even more likely when one takes into account that a quarter of Egypt’s 85 million people live in shanty towns and one-third of the government’s budget is spent on subsidies, mostly for fuel, which benefit the better-off (with cheap gasoline leading to streets choked with traffic) whereas the subsidies aimed to the lower income groups (bottled butane gas used for cooking by the poor which is heavily subsidized) mostly end up to the pockets of middle men.<sup>96</sup>

### **Conclusions**

At the time of writing, it seems that the series of soft coups by Morsi and the Brotherhood, carried out with the collusion of (at least) parts of the army, under the guidance of the transnational elite (particularly the US-based part of it) has been successful in imposing an Islamic constitution in Egypt and in creating a new kind of client regime based on Islamic “democratization” which could well function as a model for the entire Middle East. The marginal adoption of the Islamic constitution in the first round of the referendum, which is expected to become a clear adoption in the second round, will give the Islamists the momentum to impose the new model in society at large and transform accordingly the Egyptian institutions.

Despite therefore the hypocritical declarations of the transnational elite about the “democratization” of Egypt and the Arab world in general, in fact, all that this elite has always been really interested was a pseudo-democratization that would replace autocratic client regimes that were politically bankrupt, like those of Ben Ali and Mubarak, with a new kind of democratic “clientelism” based on an alliance of Islamists with the middle classes. That is, an alliance which, under the protection of a “professional” army, will secure the integration of the countries concerned into the New World Order of neoliberal globalization and representative “democracy.” As a *Financial Times* report described what this process involves:<sup>97</sup>

To restore and accelerate the country’s growth path, the new government will have to engender an enormous economic restructuring. Ironically, Mr Mubarak’s last government was arguably his most reform minded. A democratic replacement should set three guiding principles: promote private enterprise (Cairo’s stock market capitalisation is about \$14.5bn, according to MSCI – not quite half that of Colombia), invest in physical infrastructure, and clamp down on corruption and tax evasion. (...) But its

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Patrick Cockburn, “The true price of Egypt’s freedom,” *The Independent* (27/3/2012).

<sup>97</sup> “Egypt: in pharaoh’s economy,” *The Financial Times* (16/2/2011).

fiscal deficit could reach 12 per cent by 2012, partly because of state subsidies on fuel and food that are indicative of the economic distortions that need to be addressed. A painful transition to a fairer and more productive economy lies ahead. Without it, Egypt's political gains are likely to be fleeting.

However, the "enormous economic restructuring" and the "painful transition to a fairer and more productive economy," which were required by the transnational elite, clearly could not have been achieved by the hated Mubarak regime without the risk of a social explosion. On the other hand, such changes could perfectly well be achieved by a democratically-elected Muslim Brotherhood government, which would have no objections to such a program, as long as it could go ahead with the Islamization of the state (or what Egyptians already call its "Brotherhoodization"). This means that there is no chance that the demands of the victims of neoliberal globalization (the unemployed, the low-waged, the small farmers and self-employed, the "poor" in general) will be met. ***But, this is exactly the essence of the New World Order, as expressed by the values of ideological globalization: to create an impression not only of pseudo-democracy but also of pseudo-revolution and pseudo-resistance, so that all possible forms of antisystemic struggle are blocked, in a "democratic" way.*** This is the model successfully tested in Latin America where the old politically bankrupt military dictatorships have been replaced by "democratic" regimes which have proven much more efficient to fully integrate the countries concerned into the NWO of neoliberal globalization and representative "democracy," without the risk of any non-controllable (by the elites) social turbulences.

However, although the model of Islamic "democratization" is perfectly suitable in all cases of converting authoritarian client regimes (e.g. Tunisia and Egypt) into a new form of more sophisticated client regime where all the rituals and paraphernalia of "democracy" are present, this method is not suitable in the cases where non-client regimes have to be replaced by client regimes (e.g. Libya and Syria). Such cases usually involve regimes with a strong popular base, as they are historically the product of national liberation movements (e.g. Nasserite and Ba'athist movements). In these cases the usual kind of color "revolution" instigated by the transnational elite is very risky in bringing about, by itself, regime change and this is why the transnational elite resorts to the strategy of armed insurrection (Syria) or armed insurrection combined with direct military intervention (Libya) in order to achieve the full integration of such countries into the NWO, as we shall see in the last part of this book.

The practical implication of the above conclusions for the Left (assuming that it has not yet degenerated in its entirety) is that the crucial issue in the NWO is not anymore how to help the struggle to replace authoritarian regimes with "democratic" regimes (which presently is the aim also of the transnational elite,

e.g. Tunisia and Egypt!) The real issue is how to help the developing struggle for national liberation, in the sense of gaining or re-gaining economic and national sovereignty in a globalized world, through the creation of self-reliant economies confederated in economic unions that have broken their ties from the rapidly developing “global governance.” This could only be achieved through the creation of a broad Popular Front in each country that would unite all patriotic forces that would fight first for national sovereignty (that involves political as well as economic and cultural sovereignty), which is also the fundamental precondition for social liberation, i.e. the systemic form to be adopted once national liberation has been achieved.