

Is Egypt's Labor Movement Being Co-opted by Globalists?

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"Herein lies the secret of why all radical (i.e. poor) parties necessarily become the tools of the money-powers, the Equites, the Bourse. Theoretically their enemy is capital, but practically they attack, not the Bourse, but Tradition on behalf of the Bourse. This is as true today as it was for the Gracchuan age, and in all countries..." Oswald Spengler.[i]

The labor movement Solidarity is given credit for the toppling of a Soviet state that began a process of "color revolutions" which resulted in the epochal dismantling of the Soviet bloc. This was cheered by neocons, liberals and certain types of Marxist alike. Whether it was a positive step in global relations is a matter of one's subjective viewpoint.

What the collapse of the Eastern bloc did achieve was a multiplicity of states that are undergoing globalisation, privatisation and cultural bastardisation, in a process of reconstructing these states to fit into an international economic order. The Middle East is now undergoing the same tumult of "color revolutions." In Egypt a labor movement has emerged that looks suspiciously like a globalist creation.

There has been a lot of cheering among Western liberals and others at the overthrow of Islamic despots in Tunisia and Egypt, with an hurrah chorus going up as revolts break out in Yemen, Bahrain, Jordan, Iran and Libya. The champions of the "peoples' revolts" seem to readily swallow in entirety the media descriptions of these revolts as "spontaneous uprisings." Many also believe in their revolutionary zeal that these revolts are the harbingers for the overthrowing of capitalism. As one might expect, the adherents of Trotskyism are the most enthusiastic of the Left, but historically Trotskyites have not usually been much further than a gentle poke to see them fall into the embrace of US policy.[ii]

Amidst the jubilation in some well-meaning (and not-so-well-meaning) quarters at the formation of the Egyptian Federation of Independent Unions it should be kept in mind that a lot of time and money have been expended by globalist bodies such as NED to create labor movements that can co-opt legitimate demands for reform. Any organization that can be linked to such organizations as NED, and the American Center for International Labor Solidarity should become immediately suspect. What then is the situation in regard to the emergence of a new labor movement in Egypt?

Center for Trade Union and Workers' Services and the

Real Estate Tax Authority

The Federation of Independent Egyptian Unions (FIEU) came apparently from nowhere at the crucial juncture of revolt to support the call for a national strike beginning February 1, 2011. However the foundations of the FIEU were long established via the Center for Trade Union and Workers' Services and the Real Estate Tax Authority. FIEU received accolades from the AFL-CIO in 2010 when it was given the AFL-CIO George Meany-Lane Kirkpatrick Human Rights Award. Sen. Robert P Casey Jr. (D. Penn.), Chair of the Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South and Central Asian Affairs of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations addressed the award-giving.

Casey is a prominent player in the US push for a reconstructed Middle East in the American image, and was the key-note speaker at the conference of the Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED) in January 2010. POMED emphasized the remarks of Casey on Iran's "green revolutionaries":

"[W]e are inspired by the green movement, by people in the U.S. who remain demonstrably supportive of those in the Iranian streets. The further development of the Iranian opposition movement will change the country forever."^[iii]

Casey also alluded to the newtech strategies that are intrinsic to the "color revolutions" in every part of the world they have manifested:

"In discussing future prospects for democratic momentum, Casey acknowledged the role of new technologies – facebook, twitter, and blogging – in 'opening up more space for a democratic discussion.' He praised the recently passed 'Voice Act,' which he hopes will enable Iranians to more easily communicate amongst themselves by removing firewalls imposed by the Iranian regime."^[iv]

At this conference several key speakers were from the "civil society" milieu in the Middle East, and appealed for US assistance.

Mohammad Azraq of the 2010 Leaders for Democracy Fellowship in Jordan stated at the conference that so far from there being widespread suspicion of the USA as supportive of supposedly pro-American regimes (as the news media implies), the "civil society" activists were looking to the USA for support:

"Most strongly supported the expansion of MEPI programs and called for more aid directly channeled to civil society. In Lebanon, there was agreement that the U.S. should find ways to develop 'Civil Society 2.0,' a concept that incorporates many of the new social networking technologies to facilitate more meaningful discussions within Middle Eastern countries."^[v]

AFL-CIO/NED

The AFL-CIO has historically well served the American Establishment, "military-industrial

complex” or whatever else one chooses to call the network of globalists who are generally guiding US policy whether under Republicans or Democrats. In particular the AFL-CIO works closely with the National Endowment for Democracy. NED was itself conceived by Tom Kahn, overseas liaison for the AFL-CIO who maintained contact with “civil society activists” such as Solidarity in Poland. He was a veteran Shachtmanite,[vi] this line of American Trotskyism having pursued a pro-US position during the Cold War and thereafter. NED’s President is Carl Gershman, another veteran Trotskyite.[vii]

Something of the NED program is stated by David Lowe:

“From time to time Congress has provided special appropriations to the Endowment to carry out specific democratic initiatives in countries of special interest, including Poland (through the trade union Solidarity), Chile, Nicaragua, Eastern Europe (to aid in the democratic transition following the demise of the Soviet bloc), South Africa, Burma, China, Tibet, North Korea and the Balkans. With the latter, NED supported a number of civic groups, including those that played a key role in Serbia’s electoral breakthrough in the fall of 2000. More recently, following 9/11 and the NED Board’s adoption of its third strategic document, special funding has been provided for countries with substantial Muslim populations in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia.”[viii]

Clearly, NED’s purpose is “world revolution” in the interests of globalism. The states targeted for “regime change” have been the same as those blacklisted by George Soros and a host of others such as the International Republican Institute, Freedom House,[ix] *ad nauseum*. Islamic states are presently their primary concern.

John Quaccia cogently stated the AFL-CIO-NED purposes and associations, writing:

“Few tax payers are familiar with the National Endowment for Democracy, a publicly funded yet privately owned organization operating in at least forty countries. NED’s mission? To help the United States set up capitalist economies around the world, backed by regimes that are friendly to U.S. big business.

“...Equally disturbing, yet more surprising, is the role that leaders of the U.S. labor federation, the AFL-CIO, play in carrying out the NED’s dirty work. The AFL-CIO’s Solidarity Center is at work in twenty-eight countries, discouraging radical organizing among workers and promoting privatization by assisting unions and labor groups that support private enterprise.

“The AFL-CIO Solidarity Center’s predecessor, the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), was one of the four government-funded labor institutes created during the cold war to prevent foreign countries from establishing independent economic systems.”[x]

Quaccia states that NED was founded by Reagan after the CIA operations became too well-known and discredited. “As an NED founder, Allen Weinstein, stated in 1991, ‘A lot of what we do today was done covertly 25 years ago by the CIA.’”[xi]

Quaccia names associations that NED has with organizations whose interests in legitimate labor reform are difficult to understand, a matter that this writer raised in a recent article for *The Foreign Policy Journal*. [xii]

Quaccia continues: “The NED works through multiple constituencies: The International Republican Institute, The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, the Center for International Private Enterprise, the Free Trade Union Institute, and American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS), better known as the Solidarity Center.”[xiii]

The Solidarity Center’s stalwart labor activists don’t seem to regard sitting down in conclave with the International Republican Institute and the Center for International Private Enterprise as any conflict of interest. To the contrary, as will be shown at the “conclusion” of this article, privatisation is supported by the Solidarity Center. As Quiccas states, the purpose of NED is to derail the labor movement and ensure that the “right” type of economic system is inaugurated in the wake of the “color revolutions” they sponsor in tandem with OSI, IRI, and others.

The Solidarity Center cites its funding as coming from,

“...both public and private non-profit sources. Funding sources include the U.S. Agency for International Development, the National Endowment for Democracy, the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Labor, the AFL-CIO, private foundations, and national and international labor organizations.”[xiv]

Such labor unions in the former Soviet bloc were criticized as nothing more than appendages of the State apparatus, so why should the Solidarity Center be regarded as anything different in regard to serving US policy?

Quaccio states that the Solidarity Center is active in backing anti-Chavez activities in Venezuela, particularly via the Confederation of Venezuelan Workers. Hence one of the few states left that opposes globalisation and has even formed a Bolivarian bloc is being subverted in the guise of defending workers’ rights. Watch Venezuela as a new hot spot for a “spontaneous revolt” (sic).

Center for Trade Union and Workers’ Services, a “Solidarity Center Partner”

The much-lauded Federation of Independent Egyptian Unions sounds suspiciously like a globalist operation. The Center for Trade Union and Workers’ Services (CTUWS) established in 1990 which, together with the Real Estate Tax Authority Union, has formed the basis of the Federation of Independent Egyptian Unions. CTUWS is a “Solidarity Center partner.” The Solidarity Center states:

“In a historic move for the Egyptian labor movement, the 27,000-member Real Estate Tax Authority Union will become Egypt’s first independent union, reports the Center for Trade Union and Worker Services, a Solidarity Center partner.”[xv]

Kamal Abbas is General Coordinator of the CTUWS. He has been groomed by attendance at globalist and US labor conferences which serve to co-opt the labor movements into the globalization process.

World Forum on Democracy: Where Capital and Socialism Meet

Ten years ago Kamal Abbas was a panellist at the founding conference of the World Forum on Democracy, held in Warsaw.

Other attendees included the omnipresent **George Soros**, who was one of four individual to deliver opening remarks. Along with sundry trades unions and politicians there were hardline workers' advocates such as **John Bolton**, Senior Vice President, *American Enterprise Institute*; **Aryeh Neier**, President of Soros' US-branch of the *Open Society Institute*; **Thomas Melia**, Vice President for Programs, *National Democratic Institute* (USA); **Aleksander Smolar**, President of the Stefan Batory Foundation (co-sponsor of the conference with Freedom House), and member of the board of the *Open Society Institute*, Poland; **Paul Wolfowitz**, Dean, School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University; **Kenneth Adelman**, Secretary of the Board, *Freedom House*; **Daniel Kaufman**, Senior Manager of Governance, *World Bank Group*; **Carl Gershman**, President, *National Endowment for Democracy*; **Fareed Zakaria**, Managing Editor, *Foreign Affairs* (The journal of the Council on Foreign Relations); **Madeleine Albright**, U.S. Secretary of State; **Bette Bao Lord**, Chairman of the Board, *Freedom House* and a member of the *Council on Foreign Relations*;^[xvi] **Egidijus Aleksandravicius**, Chairman, *Open Society Institute-Lithuania*; **John Bohn**, Chairman of the Board, *Center for International Private Enterprise*, USA; **John Brademas**, Chairman, *National Endowment for Democracy*; **Mikhail Chachkhunashvili**, Executive Director, *Open Society Georgia Foundation*; **Jose Conde Rodrigues**, *Socialist International*, Portugal; **Lynn Costa**, Program Coordinator, *Center for International Private Enterprise*, USA; **James Denton**, Executive Director, *Freedom House*; **Nadia Diuk**, Senior Program Officer for *Europe and New Independent States*, *National Endowment for Democracy*, USA; **Ivan Doherty**, Director of Political Party Programs, *National Democratic Institute*, USA; **John Fox**, Director, Washington Office, *Open Society Institute*; **Barbara Haig**, Director of Programs, *National Endowment for Democracy*; **Zuhra Halimova**, Executive Director, *Open Society Institute*, Tajikistan; **Adrian Karatnycky**, President, *Freedom House*; **Art Kaufman**, Project Manager, *National Endowment for Democracy*; **Annette Laborey**, Executive Director, *Open Society Institute - Paris*; **Irena Lasota**, President, *Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe*; **Elena Leontjeva**, President, *Lithuanian Free Market Institute*; **David Lowe**, Director of External Relations, *National Endowment for Democracy*; **Mark Palmer**, Vice Chairman of the Board, *Freedom House*; **Vitaly Portnikov**, *Radio Free Europe - Radio Liberty*, Russia; **Rodger Potocki**, Program Officer for East Central Europe, *National Endowment for Democracy*; **Andrzej Sadowski**, Vice-President, *Adam Smith Research Center*, Poland; **John Sullivan**, Executive Director, *Center for International Private Enterprise*; **Marc Thiessen**, Spokesman, U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; **Francis Fukuyama**, *RAND Corp.*

Attendees representing labor movements included: **Harry Kamberis**, Executive Director, *Solidarity Center*;^[xvii] **Bronislaw Geremek**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Poland, who was an advisor to the *Inter-Factory Strike Committee of Solidarity*, a delegate to the *Gdansk-Oliwa National Convention of Solidarity*, and from 1983 to 1990 continued to work with Solidarity as an advisor to Lech Walesa; *Solidarity* veteran and Polish Prime Minister **Jerzy Karol Buzek**; **Tadeusz Mazowiecki**, a Member of the Polish Sejm, who served as head of the *Inter-factory Strike Committee in Gdansk*;^[xviii] **Thomas Melia** of the *National Democratic Institute* and an associate director of the *AFL-CIO*;^[xix] **Fred van Leeuwen**, Executive Board, *International Confederation of Free Trade Unions*; **Bengt Save-Soderbergh**, *International Centre of the Swedish Labour Movement*. **Carl Gershman**, as befits an old-timer from the Trotskyite milieu, president of NED, has also been a resident scholar at *Freedom House*, and Executive Director of the *Social Democrats USA*,^[xx] a home for other

ex-Trots who support American globalism.

While the list of the WDF attendees seems tedious, a close look will show representation primarily from the Soros network, NED, and Freedom House, together with White House neocons such as Paul Wolfowitz and John Bolton, teamed up with workers' activists such as Harry Kamberis of the Solidarity Center, and representatives from the Socialist International sitting about with reps from the Free Market Institute, Center for International Private Enterprise, and the Adam Smith Research Center.

The co-sponsors of the Conference were Freedom House, and the Stefan Batory Foundation, "which was founded by George Soros, a Hungarian-American financier and philanthropist, in 1988 in Warsaw, Poland." [xxi]

Since the WFD does not appear to have met subsequent to the first conference, the assumption is that the purpose to the 2000 conference was to sound out and establish contacts with future leaders.

National Endowment for Democracy Funded Egyptian Unions

NED funding for labor dissidents has been channelled via the AFL-CIO's Solidarity Center. Its latest published report (2009), states that the American Center for International Labor Solidarity was given \$318,757 for work in Egypt. The same year, among sundry other organizations involved in Egypt, NED also gave \$187,569 to the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE). While support for workers rights is of course laudable, what is questionable is why the same organization that funds and trains labor movement personnel throughout the world, also funds and trains those who are engaged in the process of privatisation and globalization. As will be shown below, the Solidarity Center ideologically supports privatisation and globalization, and the question that remains is whether such organizations, especially when they are close to the US Government and big business think tanks, are actually working as adjuncts for world capital, and are using workers as cannon fodder, just as the masses have been used in prior revolts. [xxii]

Jubilation at Mubarak's End

Heba F. El-Shazli, regional program director for the Middle East and North Africa at the AFL-CIO's [American Center for International Labor Solidarity](#), enthused at the overthrow of Mubarak that on the "glorious day" that Mubarak went, she "got a call from my good dear trade union brother Kamal Abbas, who kept yelling Mabrouk ya, Heba! Congratulations! Hear listen to the people - and he put the phone up in the air in Tahrir Square and I heard the lovely sounds of joy and celebration. I was in tears!" [xxiii]

Prof. El-Shazli, writing on the role of the reconstructed labor movement in the revolt in Egypt, stated:

"...What is far less known is the role of the small, repressed independent Egyptian labor movement in keeping Egyptian hopes and spirits alive. On January 30, in the middle of Tahrir Square, those workers and their representatives announced the formation of the new '[Independent Egyptian Trade Union Federation](#).'... Perhaps the organization most responsible for nurturing the fragile flame of independent unionism over the past decade is

the [Center for Trade Union and Worker Services](#) (CTUWS)—an organization focused on grassroots labor education, training and legal representation.”[xxiv]

Conclusion

The world has not yet reached the stage where the lion shall sit down with the lamb. However, the AFL-CIO’s Solidarity Center waxes lyrical on the problems of privatisation as dictated by the World Bank and IMF in regard to Egypt, and alludes to the genuinely Egyptian course that was undertaken by Nasser, but does not advocate a real revolt against privatisation and globalization. Rather, as one would expect from a labor body that sits down with Freedom House, neocons, Soros, IRI, et al, and receives funding from NED, the Center advocates collusion with the forces of globalization whilst talking of “worker rights.” Hence in its policy statement on Egypt, the Solidarity Center declares:

“The ETUF, Egyptian NGOs, the Egyptian government, the US government, the international labor and human rights communities, and the US corporations can all play a role in protecting the fundamental rights of Egyptian workers and including them as an essential partners in Egypt’s development. The most important step in protecting workers rights would be for the Egyptian government and the ETUF to embrace independent trade unionism as a way to secure Egyptian workers’ rights as the Egyptian economy enters the global market, rather than undermining it.”[xxv]

Therefore the AFL-CIO-Solidarity Center-NED axis, in conjunction with sundry necons, free marketeers, and Soros networks, recommends an ideological foundation for Egyptian labor based on incorporation into the global market rather than rejection in favor of economic sovereignty. Why do these supposed workers’ advocates recommend an Egyptian workers’ compact with US corporations, the US government, and NGOs which are for the most part creations of Freedom House, IRI, NED, etc.? The same game was played behind the facade of “human rights” in South Africa which ended up not with improved conditions for Black workers but with globalization and privatisation; likewise with the “liberation” of Kosovo which has opened up to international capital the immense mineral wealth of the region.

The globalists see the old Islamic regimes as passé; anomalies in a global market, and if change is inexorable, then it has to be co-opted. The question remains, however, as to whether forces are being unleashed that will not be amenable to the “new world order?” If there are such forces, they are unlikely to be found in the hierarchy of a globalist-conceived labor movement that supports free market economics.

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