



Egypt: A year of revolution and counter-revolution

As economic crisis worsens new class conflicts loom

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HARD TIMES - BUT NOT FOR THE 1%

Defend pensions, fight the cuts in jobs and pay

Roger Shives

As the clouds of recession grow darker, practically every section of society feels the grim effects. Apart from one group - there are few signs of recession for the super-rich!

Worldwide, they are still prospering and trying to solve the economy's problems by attacking their workers. Bosses at the industrial giant Unilever are trying to savagely cut the pensions of their workforce in Britain. But workers are fighting back with strikes.

Pickets at Unilever's Purfleet factory told Socialist Party members why they're angry at their bosses. "Unilever is the 18th richest company in the world. Chief executive Paul Polman is on £54 million in pay and share options. He has a chauffeur and claimed £75,000 in travel expenses last year."

But, as the pickets concluded: "It's us that makes them their money!" - though it's us who suffer. The government attacks public sector workers' jobs and aims to slash benefits for the sick and disabled. Pension rights are under siege. Real wages fell 4.2% over the last year.

Now, the Resolution Foundation 'thinktank'

predicts that the recession's effects will be long lasting. Looking at ten million families with incomes between £12,000 to £29,000 a year, it predicts, on the basis of sluggish growth rates, that such families' earnings might not return to pre-recession levels until at least 2020. But in this land of permanent pay freeze, again the super-rich will dodge the permafrost.

Most working class, middle class and young people are not prepared to accept this gloomy future offered by capitalism in decline. The rich, the owners of industry, finance and commerce, have declared war on us. As Unilever workers and many public sector trade unionists have already done, the unions need to fight.

The capitalist system of booms and slumps looks like being mainly slump for the next decade - unless you're part of the richest 1%. If you reject this bosses' future, join the Socialist Party, help build a working class-based opposition and help lay the basis for a socialist society.



photo Paul Mattsson