

Egypt's Revolutionary Socialists praise the junta's presidential elections

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In a May 15 statement, the Revolutionary Socialists (RS)—a petty-bourgeois pseudo-left group in Egypt affiliated internationally with parties of the International Socialist Tendency (IST) – embraced the presidential elections in Egypt, glorifying them as means to fight the “counterrevolution” and the “old regime.”

The RS stressed the “importance of active participation” in the elections in order to “prevent the coming of *feloul* [remnants of the old regime]” to power. The RS claimed that by voting for a candidate “affiliated with the revolution,” the “popular classes” can counter efforts by the *feloul* to re-erect “Mubarak’s regime” and “create a situation hostile to the revolution.”

The RS promotion of the elections as another highlight of the US-backed “transition” exemplifies again the RS’s thoroughly counterrevolutionary role.

Contrary to the claims of the RS, the elections are not a step towards “the completion of the revolution.” They are a means for the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) junta to bring in a president tasked with intensifying the counterrevolutionary measures against the Egyptian working class, to defend Egyptian capitalism and imperialist rule throughout the Middle East. They are not part of a struggle for, but of a struggle against, the Egyptian revolution.

The candidates accepted by SCAF run on a pro-capitalist platform and pose no threat to the continuing rule of finance capital in Egypt. The junta itself simply banned outright the candidates it feared the most—the ultra-conservative Salafist Hazem Salah Abu Ismail and the first candidate of the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood (MB), Khairat al-Shater.

The elections will be held at gunpoint under emergency law. All three field armies and naval forces

will be employed to control the polling stations. *De facto* dictator Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, Mubarak’s former foreign minister, met with chief of staff Sami Anan and interim Prime Minister Kamal al-Ghazouli last Thursday to “discuss the final preparations of the presidential elections.”

Media are reporting SCAF plans to rig the vote in favor of one of their preferred candidates. Those considered to be closest to the junta are Ahmed Shafiq, a former minister, prime minister and commander of the Egyptian Air Force, and Amr Moussa, also a former minister under Mubarak and ex-leader of the Arab League. On Sunday the state-owned newspaper *Al-Ahram* published a poll claiming that Moussa (31.7 percent) and Shafiq (22.6 percent) are in the lead and likely to face each other in the run-off elections scheduled for June 16 and 17.

Though the RS backed the junta initially—after SCAF took power on February 11 last year, they declared that Mubarak’s generals could be pressured for democratic and social reforms—it no longer dares to support the military and their candidates openly.

After the junta proved to be deeply hostile to the social and democratic demands of the revolution the military junta is widely hated amongst the Egyptian masses. Military police have been brutally cracking down on protesters and strikers nearly on a daily basis now for 16 months and the RS fear that a too overtly pro-military president could quickly lead to another explosion of the class struggle.

With their statement the RS thus gives tacit support for other bourgeois candidates—particularly the major Islamist candidates Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh and Mohamed Mursi. Fotouh is an ex-member of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) supported by the Salafist Nour Party and the ultra-right-wing Islamist group al-

Gama'a al-Islamiyya, while Mursi is the MB's candidate.

The statement doesn't call to vote for a particular candidate but for a candidate "affiliated with the revolution" against the "*feloul*", a term applied especially to Shafiq and Moussa.

The claim of the RS that the Egyptian working class can fight the counterrevolution in an alliance with the Islamists is a dangerous trap for the working class. Fotouh and Mursi don't speak for the interests of the Egyptian masses, but of a different section of the Egyptian ruling class competing with the military for control of the Egyptian economy.

Like Shafiq and Moussa, the Islamists are deeply hostile to the social and democratic aspirations of the Egyptian working class. All pledge to bring back "stability" and "security" if elected—code words for the continued suppression of working class struggles.

The same applies to the official "left" candidates, the Nasserist Hamdeen Sabahi, the labor lawyer Khaled Ali and the candidate of the Socialist Popular Alliance Party, Abul-Ezz El-Hariri. These candidates have close ties to the Western funded independent trade unions and NGOs and a long experience in controlling strikes and protests.

As the RS themselves these candidates sociologically represent the interests of more affluent sections of the middle class, a social layer tied financially and politically to Western imperialism. Behind the smokescreen of some radical phrases, they offer their services to keep the workers under the control of the state and the union bureaucracies, to prevent an independent movement of the Egyptian working class on the basis of an international socialist program.

Turnout in the elections is expected to be low, reflecting growing popular disillusionment with the existing political parties. In recent months the Islamists who won the parliamentary elections and collaborated closely with the military have further lost support in the masses.

Growing hostility to the junta and the Islamists alike is a blow to the policies of the RS, indicating an ever-growing sense amongst workers and youth that Mubarak's system can't be rooted out at the ballot box. It must be brought down by continued revolutionary struggle and replaced with a worker's government fighting for socialist policies in Egypt and throughout

the region.



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