

Egyptian Revolutionary Socialists endorse Islamist presidential candidate

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The petty-bourgeois Revolutionary Socialists (RS) group has endorsed the candidate of the right-wing Muslim Brotherhood (MB), Mohamed Mursi, against Ahmed Shafiq in the second round of the June 16-17 Egyptian presidential elections. The presidential elections are the first since mass working class protests toppled US-backed dictator President Hosni Mubarak last year.

In a May 28 statement titled “Down with Shafiq... Down with the new Mubarak” the RS claim that a vote for the Islamist Mursi would be a means to defend “democratic and social gains” of the revolution against the “counterrevolutionary candidate” Shafiq. The latter was the last prime minister under Mubarak.

The RS write that a “victory of Shafiq in the second round means a great loss of the revolution.” They “therefore call on all forces of reform and revolution and all other candidates affiliated with the revolution to form a national front against the candidate standing on the side of the counterrevolution.”

The statement calls upon the MB to make a pledge to form a presidential coalition with Nasserist candidate Hamdeen Sabahi and the liberal Islamist candidate Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh as vice presidents and to choose a prime minister from outside the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), the political arm of the MB.

The RS’ support for the MB, a government of national unity with right-wing figures, and the fraudulent framework of the US-backed “democratic transition” once again exposes the counterrevolutionary role of the petty-bourgeois “left.”

The claim that Mursi as president and a government led by the MB would be less hostile to the Egyptian masses than Shafiq is a blatant lie and a trap for the working class. The MB is a right-wing bourgeois party which defends capitalist and imperialist rule in Egypt

and throughout the region as ruthlessly as ousted dictator and longtime US-stooge Hosni Mubarak. Representing the economic interests of one section of big business and finance capital in Egypt, the MB is deeply hostile to the social and democratic aspirations of the Egyptian workers and youth.

After the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) took power February last year the MB collaborated closely with Mubarak’s generals in order to bring the revolution to a halt. In March it supported a law banning strikes and protests issued by the military junta and opposed any mass protests against military rule.

At the same time, the MB sought to deepen their ties with US imperialism. Mursi, who studied and worked in the US during the 1980s, has been playing a central role in the MB’s collaboration with the US and the junta. As the head of the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), the political arm of the MB, he regularly met with SCAF and high-ranking US officials.

After the results of the initial round of the elections were announced Mursi was quick to reaffirm the junta generals that he seeks to continue the counterrevolutionary alliance. He praised the police and the army for securing the presidential elections and stated that “the status of policemen and officers will remain the same,” if elected.

Washington gave various signs that they seek to expand their alliance with the Islamists in Egypt. In recent months, it worked to establish closer ties with various Sunni Islamist governments and groups to pursue its strategic and economic interests in the Middle East. In Tunisia the US works closely with the Islamist Ennahda government, in Libya the NATO war put a variety of Islamist militias in power, and in Syria the US relies on Islamist forces, including al-Qaeda

type terrorist groups, to prepare regime change.

In Egypt itself, after the MB fielded their first candidate Kheirat al-Shater, who was later disqualified by the junta and replaced by Mursi, State Department officials said they were “untroubled and even optimistic about the Brotherhood’s reversal of its pledge not to seek the presidency.” After the initial round of the presidential elections, which put Mursi in lead, Washington announced that it would collaborate closely with any elected president.

To anyone familiar with the RS’ record, their support for a right-wing bourgeois candidate comes as no surprise. Since the outbreak of the revolution, the RS sought to subordinate the working class to one or another faction of the bourgeoisie to prevent an overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a workers state in Egypt.

Sociologically representing more affluent sections of the middle class, a social layer tied financially and politically to the Egyptian bourgeoisie and imperialism, the RS fear nothing more than a politically independent movement of the working class.

After SCAF took power in February last year, they supported the junta and claimed that, “the council aims to reform the political and economic system.” As soon as their collaboration with the junta was threatened by mass protests against the military itself, they sought an alliance with the Islamists, opposing popular demands for a “second revolution.”

After the initial round of the elections the RS’ alliance with the Islamists lies more and more in tatters. While the RS try to sell a vote for Mursi as something progressive to Egyptian workers and youth, there is a widespread sense that none of the candidates speak for the revolution, and that the whole framework of the elections is illegitimate.

On the same day, the RS published their statement in support of the MB, protests erupted all over Egypt against the elections, with demonstrators shouting against Shafiq and Mursi alike tearing down posters of both candidates. Alaa Shafani, a ceramic worker from Mansoura spoke for the majority of the Egyptian masses who abstained from the elections when he told the Egyptian newspaper *Al Ahram Online*: “The elections were clearly controlled by the state. I boycotted the elections in the first place because they are illegal.”



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