

The Mubarak verdict

Johannes Stern
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The verdicts handed down Saturday in the trial of deposed Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and his top aides are a political travesty.

Accused of overseeing killings of protesters by police in the initial weeks of the Egyptian revolution in January-February 2011, Mubarak and former Interior Minister Habib El-Adly were cleared, on the basis that there was no evidence they were involved. Both were condemned to life in prison, but only for failing to halt the slaughter. Over 1,000 people were killed by police during the initial uprising.

The judiciary acquitted El-Adly's deputies and the heads of the various security and police forces that unleashed deadly force against protesters. As it has ruled there is no evidence that Mubarak actively committed any crimes, the judiciary has offered legal grounds for letting him off entirely, should he appeal the verdict in the future.

The ruling whitewashes the Egyptian state machine, on which Egypt's ruling military junta rests, as well the role of US and European imperialism. Having worked closely with Mubarak for decades, Washington and its allies backed Mubarak during the February 2011 uprising and now back the junta. In early February of 2011, as Egyptian security forces killed hundreds of protesters, US envoy Frank Wisner declared, "President Mubarak's role remains utterly critical in the days ahead as we sort our way toward the future."

The verdict makes clear that the current Egyptian regime rests on a lie—the claim that the social and democratic aspirations that drove the working class into revolutionary struggle last year could be met by simply deposing a few officials at the summit of the state apparatus.

Any serious examination of Mubarak's crimes would expose the entire state apparatus of the Egyptian ruling class. The Egyptian junta, consisting of Mubarak's old generals, rests upon the same security forces as

Mubarak, protected by his judiciary, and financed and armed by his allies among the imperialist powers.

The verdict also exposes the political bankruptcy of the Egyptian middle-class "left." Hostile to a revolutionary struggle to mobilize the working class to overthrow the regime and fight for socialism, it advanced instead the claim that it could build democracy under the junta's dictatorship. The verdict in the Mubarak trial again confirms the sham character of the so-called "democratic transition" taking place under the junta's heel—including the June 16-17 presidential run-off election.

Both candidates who made it to the run-offs—Ahmed Shafiq, the last prime minister under Mubarak, and Mohamed Mursi, the candidate of the right-wing Muslim Brotherhood (MB)—are deeply hostile to the revolution. Shafiq reportedly described Mubarak as a "role model" in a speech at the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt, pledging to restore order within a month using executions and brutal force.

Mursi, who collaborated with the junta and has close ties with the US, also made clear he intends to rely on Mubarak's police establishment. After winning the first round of the elections, he praised the police and the army, assuring them that "the status of policemen and officers will remain the same."

Despite these statements, the middle-class "left" forces are stepping up their campaign to back Mursi and, through him, the established social order. On Tahrir Square on Saturday, Hisham Fouad, a leader of the Revolutionary Socialists (RS) group, declared: "I am standing by Mohamed Mursi, strategically in the presidential elections. We believe if numbers continue to flow into Egypt's squares and streets this will make it harder for Shafiq to get into government."

The petty-bourgeois "left's" call for a "strategic" vote for the Islamist right, which aligns them with the Egyptian state, is the latest in a long series of political

betrayals.

In the first months of the revolution, the RS praised the junta as a progressive force, claiming that the junta's generals could be pressured from below for reforms and to cleanse the institutions of the Mubarak regime. After this perspective was shattered last year by popular calls for a "second revolution"—which the RS opposed—they are now endorsing the Islamist MB as an alternative to ex-Mubarak regime officials.

After the initial victories, the experience of the revolution has shown that waves of protests, however massive, cannot secure the victory of the revolution's social and democratic demands. The working class will get nothing by trying to pressure or reform the state apparatus of the Mubarak regime; the only way forward is to fight for its overthrow.

The critical task facing the working class is to build its own popular organs of struggles, laying the basis for the overthrow of the regime and its replacement with a workers' state struggling for socialist policies in Egypt, the Middle East and internationally.

Only such a workers' state will be able to make a full accounting of the crimes of Mubarak and his imperialist backers.

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