

Democrats downplay Supreme Court immunity ruling, while Trump doubles down on plans for dictatorship

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Monday's Supreme Court ruling giving a president legal immunity for all official acts repudiates the foundational principle of the American Revolution and the US Constitution that no person, including the commander-in-chief, is above the law. As the *World Socialist Web Site* explained, it effectively transforms the president into a dictator.

The chilling implications of this legal counterrevolution for the working class have already begun to emerge in the immediate aftermath of the 6-3 ruling by the court's far-right supermajority. Donald Trump and the fascistic Republican Party have hailed the ruling as a victory and de facto sanctioning of their "stolen election" lie and the January 6 insurrection that sought to overturn the 2020 vote and keep Trump in power as dictator-president.

Over the past several days, Trump has promoted on his social media platform, Truth Social, posts calling for the arrest and prosecution of political opponents, including President Joe Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, former Vice President Mike Pence, Senate Majority and Minority Leaders Chuck Schumer and Mitch McConnell and former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

A separate post shared and promoted by Trump lists members of the House January 6 Committee, including Republicans Liz Cheney and Adam Kinzinger and Democrats Adam Schiff, Jamie Raskin, Pete Aguilar, Zoe Lofgren and Bennie Thompson, who chaired the committee.

On Monday, at about the same time that the high court was releasing its immunity decision, Trump shared a post calling for military tribunals for his political enemies, which included an image of Liz Cheney. The post denounced her as guilty of treason and urged, "Retruth if you want televised military tribunals." In response to Trump's promotion of that post, another called for "fast trials and fast executions" and "televised hangings." Trump's sharing of these posts was quickly removed from the site.

In ordering such actions, as well as his pledge to mobilize

the military to deport 20 million migrants, Trump would, under the terms of the high court ruling, be immune from prosecution. All he would have to do is claim that he was acting in the interests of national security and therefore engaged in a "core" official act in his role as chief executive.

The immediate legal implications of the decision in *Trump v. United States* have likewise begun to emerge. Trump's sentencing for his conviction in the New York State hush money cover-up case, in which he was found guilty on 34 counts of falsifying business records to buy the silence of a porn star on the eve of the 2016 presidential election, was pushed back on Tuesday from July 11 to September 18. New York Supreme Court Justice Juan Merchan agreed to the delay to give Trump's lawyers time to file briefs on their claim that the US Supreme Court ruling means the prosecution and conviction of Trump must be vacated, because evidence in the trial included official communications between Trump and associates carried out during his presidency.

Biden and the Democrats, and their allied media, have for their part sought to limit, falsely, the dictatorial implications of the Supreme Court decision to the prospect of a second Trump term and thereby use the ruling to revive Biden's failing reelection campaign in the wake of last week's debate debacle. They have emphasized the fact that the high court, by remanding the January 6 case back to the trial court, has eliminated any chance of it coming to trial before the November election, thereby boosting Trump's prospects.

At the same time, they have obscured the fact that the ruling applies to the office of president, not to any particular president, and the election of a Democrat would mean placing a Democratic dictator-president in office, who, in the pursuit of global imperialist war, genocide, austerity and internal repression, would make use of the unchecked powers granted by the court.

Such was the substance of Biden's pathetic and impotent

televised statement Monday evening protesting the Supreme Court ruling. He made no proposals to block its implementation, avoiding above all any appeal to popular anger and discontent, claiming instead that returning him to the White House would avert the threat of autocratic rule.

This, of course, ignores the fact that he has ruled in virtual coalition with the fascist Republicans in order to prosecute the expanding war against Russia in Ukraine and the genocide in Gaza, while ending asylum rights at the border and directing mass arrests and police violence against workers and youth protesting the US-Israeli slaughter in Gaza and using reactionary laws and the labor bureaucracy to suppress strikes.

The major newspapers aligned with the Democratic Party, the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, published editorials minimizing the legal counterrevolution carried out by the unelected justices on the Supreme Court, from which under the existing system there is no appeal, seeking to politically disarm the working class while promoting the lie that electing Biden or some other Democrat would avert the danger.

The line of the *Post* was indicated by the headline of its editorial: “The Trump immunity decision isn’t the end of democracy—but it is bad.” Billionaire Jeff Bezos’s editorialists wrote: “Grave warnings aside, the sky has not yet fallen, even if a sizable chunk of it may be missing.”

Making light of the correct warnings given in dissent by justices Sotomayor and Jackson that the ruling gives legal immunity for ordering political assassinations or organizing military coups, the *Post* continued: “So it is up to the courts, including the highest in the land, to ensure the *nightmare scenario the critics have dreamed up* [emphasis added] do not manifest.”

This, of course, ignores the fact that it is precisely the highest court in the land that has carried out the judicial coup against the Constitution.

The *Times* Editorial Board spoke of the ruling as merely “*taking a step toward* [emphasis added] restoring the monarchy that the Declaration of Independence rejected.” But, as Sotomayor correctly wrote, “In every use of official power, the President is now a king above the law.”

The editorial then pivoted to arguing that the ruling added to the supposed need to elect a Democratic alternative to Trump, writing: “The decision ... significantly raises the stakes of the coming election...” The *Times* had already editorialized in favor of replacing Biden with another candidate following the increasingly senile president’s disastrous debate performance.

The Republican-aligned *Wall Street Journal*, editorializing in support of the ruling, was more open about the massive consequences of the decision. It called a focus on how the

ruling affects Trump’s electoral prospects a “blinkered view that ignores the long-run implications for the American republic.”

It continued:

The 6-3 Court majority rightly focuses on the institution of the Presidency, and the ability of all Presidents—not merely the last one—to act in the national interest free from prosecution for official acts...

This means that a President can’t be prosecuted for actions related to national security, intelligence, or foreign policy. He can’t be prosecuted, for example, for deaths that occur from ordering a drone strike. (The last is an allusion to President Barack Obama’s 2011 drone assassination of Anwar Al-Awlaki, a US citizen.)

The *Journal* states openly the basic position of finance capital, which, as Lenin explained in *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), “does not want liberty, it wants domination.” That is the only way the capitalist oligarchy can defend its rule under conditions of global wars of plunder and conquest, genocide as state policy, unprecedented levels of social inequality and the need to impose brutal and unpopular policies on the working class.

That is also why the defense of democracy is entirely bound up with the independent mobilization of the working class against the capitalist system and all of its parties and institutions of rule and for socialism.



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