

Hillary Clinton launches her presidential campaign

Patrick Martin**15 June 2015**

Hillary Clinton, the Democratic Party frontrunner for the 2016 US presidential election, officially launched her campaign at a rally Saturday in New York City. Delivered before an audience of Democratic Party hacks and union officials, the speech combined empty demagogic with contempt for the intelligence of the population.

Clinton's campaign chose the location of the speech, Four Freedoms Park on Roosevelt Island, to wrap the candidate in the mantle of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. But it was Clinton's husband who openly repudiated the already distant reformist past of the Democratic Party during his presidency. His administration's signature domestic accomplishment was the deal with the Republicans to "end welfare as we know it," destroying a key element of the social safety net established in the 1930s.

The Clinton campaign evidently believes that merely reciting a list of occupations of working-class Americans—factory workers, food servers, nurses, truckers, etc.—will cause her listeners to forget the anti-working class policies that both Democrats and Republicans have espoused for the past four decades.

In her speech, she also played up the fact that, if elected, she would be the first female president, shifting to the domain of identity politics used to promote Barack Obama.

The Democratic candidate gave examples of economic injustice in the America of 2015: "You see corporations making record profits, with CEOs making record pay, but your paychecks have barely budged. While many of you are working multiple jobs to make ends meet, you see the top 25 hedge fund managers making more than all of America's kindergarten teachers combined."

One would hardly know from this pseudo-populist rhetoric that a Democratic president has occupied the White House for the past six-and-a-half years, and that Clinton served in one of the highest positions in that

administration. Under Obama, the financial aristocracy has utilized its control of the state to exploit the crisis that erupted in 2008 to increase its wealth and strengthen its stranglehold over economic life.

As for the actual content of Clinton's proposals, these consisted largely of tax breaks or incentives for corporations. There was no suggestion of a jobs program or any serious measures to address mass unemployment, poverty and indebtedness.

Clinton is a particularly dubious vehicle for the type of social demagogic that characterized her speech. The former first lady, senator and secretary of state has amassed, along with her husband, a fortune approaching \$100 million from her decades of service to corporate interests. The Clintons rub shoulders with billionaires and CEOs every day.

At this point, Clinton is the choice of most multimillionaires to be the next occupant of the White House. A recent CNBC poll of 750 millionaires found 53 percent support for Clinton in a contest with Republican Jeb Bush, 14 points better than Obama's showing in the 2012 election with the same group.

Clinton's speech was notable for its near-silence on foreign policy, aside from a few sentences threatening China, Russia, North Korea and Iran. This is a remarkable omission for someone who served as US secretary of state for four years. There was no mention of the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya or Ukraine. She said nothing of drone warfare or the NSA spying on the telecommunications and Internet usage of every American.

Of all the candidates, Clinton has the longest and closest ties to the military-intelligence apparatus, going back to her years in her husband's White House, followed by eight years on the Senate Armed Services Committee and four years as the chief representative of American imperialism overseas.

Millions of people voted for Obama in 2008 in the mistaken hope that he would end the wars launched under the Bush administration, only to see the Obama-Biden-Clinton administration expand the war in Afghanistan, attack Libya, intervene in Syria and Yemen, relaunch the war in Iraq and provoke conflicts with nuclear-armed Russia and China in Ukraine and the South China Sea. Behind the backs of the American people, the ruling class is plotting world war.

Clinton chose not to present this record in her official campaign kickoff because of the widespread antiwar sentiment in the American population. The American people will be given no alternative between a bellicose Republican presidential nominee and a Democrat equally fervent in her willingness to use military force to promote the global interests of American imperialism.

The official launching of the Clinton campaign serves only to underscore the crisis of class rule in the United States. Two terms of the Obama administration have contributed to the hostility with which large sections of the working class view both political parties.

War, financial crisis, government spying, police violence, the worst economic slump since the Great Depression: these facts have demonstrated that the Democratic Party, like the Republican Party, does the bidding of Wall Street and the military-intelligence apparatus. The two parties maintain a pretense of bitter disagreement while they work together on a bipartisan agenda of defending the financial aristocracy and attacking the working class.

Clinton is currently the leading candidate for the Democrats, though the party is bringing forward lesser contestants such as Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders and former Maryland governor (and Baltimore mayor) Martin O’Malley in an attempt to give the party a “left” face. The aim is to give the trade unions and the pseudo-left organizations that orbit the Democratic Party something they can use to once again channel social discontent behind the Democrats.



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