

# Hillary Clinton's Democratic primary victory

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With her victories in four of the six states holding primary contests on Tuesday, including the country's most populous state, California, Hillary Clinton has become the all-but-certain presidential nominee of the Democratic Party in the 2016 elections.

Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders has not yet formally conceded, but he faces mounting calls, including from his supporters within the Democratic Party establishment, to "gracefully" bow out and endorse Clinton. Sanders is due to meet with President Barack Obama on Thursday and Obama is expected to formally declare his support for Clinton as early as this week.

In a year marked by deep and growing social discontent, the two-party system in the United States has produced, on the one hand, the fascistic billionaire Donald Trump, and, on the other, Clinton, the personification of the status quo. The impossibility of resolving any of the immense social and political problems facing workers and youth within the existing political framework could find no more conclusive demonstration.

Paralleling the ever more extreme concentration of wealth, American politics is acquiring an increasingly dynastic and nepotistic character, traditionally a hallmark of the decay of bourgeois democracy. In a country of 350 million people, the Democratic Party could do no better than nominate as its presidential candidate an individual whose political career is based, to start with, on the fact that she is the wife of a former president. First came the Bushes, father and son, and now the Clintons, husband and wife. It would hardly be surprising to learn that Michelle Obama, or perhaps one of the Obama children, is preparing a campaign.

In the person of Hillary Clinton, the Democrats have selected their most unpopular candidate. There is no doubt that the Clintons have been the target of right-wing Republican attacks, but they have provided plenty of ammunition. Their record of self-serving hypocrisy

extends back to the launching of Bill Clinton's political career in Arkansas, where he combined empty rhetoric with the closest ties to corporate titans like Walmart and the Perdue chicken empire. While in the White House, Bill Clinton orchestrated a shift of the Democratic Party further to the right, including an effort to win support among Republicans on the basis of anti-welfare legislation, "law-and-order" prison sentencing rules and pro-market economic policies.

The Clintons' corruption became even more pronounced after Bill Clinton left office, as the pair amassed more than \$150 million through their connections to corporate boardrooms and the operations of the Clinton Foundation. Hillary Clinton cultivated her relationship with Wall Street as a senator from New York and forged close ties to the military-intelligence apparatus as Obama's secretary of state.

Clinton's defining actions during this period were her support for the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which led to the deaths of more than one million people, and her direct involvement in the Obama administration's decision to invade Libya and stoke civil war in Syria. Behind her carefully crafted political façade, Clinton's real persona was most clearly revealed in the unscripted cackles of glee with which she greeted the news of the torture and murder of Muammar Gaddafi, exclaiming, "We came, we saw, he died!"

What ensured her nomination? Besides the support of the Democratic Party establishment and the media, Clinton's success represents the victory of the politics of race and gender over politics based in a general sense on class. The Clintons, Bill and Hillary, have promoted racial politics while pursuing policies with devastating consequences for the working class, including the vast majority of African-Americans. In the Democratic Party primaries, Clinton was able to win significant majorities among African-American voters and other minorities, along with older voters.

Sanders, to the extent that he centered his campaign on criticism of social inequality, won support among broad sections of workers and youth.

The pseudo-left organizations that orbit the Democratic Party and for the most part supported Sanders have been hoisted on their own petard. They prepared the outcome through a decades-long campaign against the Marxist conception that the fundamental social category is class, providing the political framework for the restructuring of bourgeois politics on the basis of race, gender and sexual identity.

Now the media is switching into high gear to proclaim Clinton's victory a "historic milestone" because she will be the first female nominee of a major party in a US presidential election. More than 35 years after the arch-reactionary Margaret Thatcher came to power in Britain and launched a war against the working class, the effort to portray Clinton's nomination as a great triumph for equality is both absurd and disgusting. It is a rehashing, in an even more naked manner, of the political marketing that accompanied the "transformative" election of Barack Obama, the first African-American chief executive, in 2008.

As for Sanders, his "political revolution" has been aimed not at developing a movement against the two-party capitalist system, but at containing and smothering social opposition and channeling it back into the Democratic Party. As the *World Socialist Web Site* warned from the beginning, this has led to a political dead end. The Democratic Party establishment is now coaxing Sanders back into the fold while the candidate himself tries to figure out how to convince the millions of workers and youth attracted by his denunciations of the "billionaire class" to line up behind Clinton.

It is critical to draw the necessary lessons and begin to construct a genuine socialist movement. The Socialist Equality Party is running candidates in the elections, Jerry White for president and Niles Niemuth for vice president, to build a political leadership for the struggles to come.

The objective tendencies that have fueled the growing political radicalization will continue to operate. There are still six weeks before the party conventions and five months until the general election. Many surprises are in store. The deepening social, economic and geopolitical

crisis, outside the control of the candidates themselves, will frame the elections. The recent strike by 39,000 Verizon workers is part of a resurgence of class struggle in the US and around the world. Internationally, every day brings new flashes of geopolitical tensions, fueled by the efforts of the United States to maintain its global domination, that threaten to spark a new world war.

Over the next five months, the SEP and its candidates will speak to and educate workers and youth in the US and internationally and fight to win support for the perspective of revolutionary Marxism. We insist on the need to reject pragmatic politics, in the form of "lesser of two evilsism" and the conception, promoted not only by Sanders but also by supposedly independent campaigns like that of the Green Party, that the political system is susceptible to pressure from below. We reject all arguments that Clinton must be supported against Trump. These are aimed at preventing a break with the two-party system, leaving workers completely unprepared for the massive shift to the right that will come after the election, whether the victor is Trump or Clinton.

The issues that are driving workers into political struggle cannot be resolved without a decisive break with the Democratic Party and the building of an independent political movement of the working class that takes direct aim at the source of inequality, war and dictatorship: the capitalist system.



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