

Clinton's right-wing economic agenda and the fight for socialism

Jerry White—SEP candidate for US president
24 June 2016

Wednesday's speech by Hillary Clinton in Raleigh, North Carolina makes it clear the Democratic Party's presumptive presidential candidate, if elected in November, would escalate the anti-worker economic agenda of the Obama administration that has already created the greatest levels of social inequality in modern American history.

Since clinching the nomination, Clinton has sought to assure both Wall Street and the military intelligence apparatus that she would be a far better steward of the domestic and foreign interests of American capitalism than her Republican opponent Donald Trump. She reiterated Wednesday that Trump would "run up our debt and cause another economic crash."

Clinton has already lined up the support of billionaires Warren Buffett and George Soros and a list of former executives from some of corporate America's largest companies, including General Motors, Delta Air Lines, Costco and Alphabet, the parent company for online search giant Google. She also has received far greater backing from Wall Street than Trump.

Well aware that the seething social discontent in America prohibits her from simply repeating President Obama's absurd claims that life has never been so good, Clinton sought to cover her right-wing economic proposals with rhetoric about economic inequality, largely borrowed from the campaign of Bernie Sanders.

She referred to stagnant and falling real wages, long-term joblessness, the crushing debt burden students face and the nation's decaying schools and infrastructure without mentioning that Obama, with her full support, had overseen this state of affairs for the last seven-and-a-half years.

Clinton gave the novel explanation that well-meaning business leaders and politicians from both parties—"whose sincerity I do not doubt"—were simply misguided. "Too many leaders in business and government have lost sight of our shared responsibility to each other and to our nation. And they let Wall Street take big risks with unregulated financial activities."

She failed to mention that it was her husband Bill

Clinton's administration that abolished the Depression-era Glass Steagall Act and deregulated the financial industry, spurring one financial bubble after the other, culminating in the 2008 crash and the social catastrophe that followed. For their services, both Clintons have been handsomely rewarded.

"We need to make sure our economy works for everyone not just for the rich or the well-connected," Clinton preached with a straight face.

At the same time, Clinton reiterated Obama's nostrum that those without work or serious prospects for a future were largely at fault because they were not keeping up with technological advances. "The old model of work where you could expect to hold a steady job with good benefits for an entire career is long gone." She praised the "flexibility" of the new jobs that have been created—largely part-time, low-paid and so-called independent contractors—suggesting that 401(k)s and health benefits should be "portable" from one job to another.

So what does Clinton propose?

1. "We need to slash unnecessary regulations...Let's free entrepreneurs to do what they do best: innovate, grow and hire...they need to be free from red tape."

Translation: More tax cuts, deregulation and government payouts to large corporations and start-up companies.

2. "Establish an infrastructure bank that will bring private sector dollars off the sidelines and put them to work here."

Translation: Instead of a public works programs, Clinton proposes more "public-private partnerships" aimed at handing over public assets to profit-making companies. This would accelerate the contracting out of good-paying jobs and continue the slashing of public sector jobs, which fell by more than 600,000 under Obama.

3. "I want to expand incentives like the new market's tax credit, empowerment zones and other ideas that bring business, government and communities together to create good jobs in poor or remote areas. Places that have lost a factory or a mine, where generations of families used to work."

Translation: Companies will be given waivers from federal job safety, environmental and wage and hour laws in order to entice US and international corporations to exploit economic desperation in areas already ravaged by deindustrialization.

4. “Rewrite the rules, so more companies share profits with employees and fewer shift profits and jobs overseas.”

Translation: Boost the efforts of the trade union bureaucracy to push so-called profit-sharing schemes, in lieu of wage increases. These hold workers’ livelihoods hostage to economic crisis and the shortsighted and even criminal business decisions of the corporate bosses, over which workers have no control.

5. “Let’s liberate the millions of Americans who already have student debt by making it easier to refinance, just like a mortgage. Let’s make it easier to have debt forgiven by doing national service.”

Translation: There will be no amelioration of the crushing levels of student debt. Instead, students will be able to be subject to the same predatory schemes that mortgage companies used in the run-up to the housing market crash in 2007-08. Heavily indebted students should be turned into indentured servants and forced to do “national service,” which most ominously could include, if the Pentagon needs more manpower, going off to fight America’s imperialist wars.

Clinton made sure to pay tribute to the trade unions—which have collaborated in the slashing of wages and shifting of health care and pension costs from the employers to workers, while reducing strikes to the lowest level since World War II. Saying “I believe we should strengthen unions,” she assured the labor bureaucracy that their financial interests would be protected under a Clinton administration, which would provide government funding to union apprenticeship programs and facilitate the investment of union pension funds in infrastructure and commercial development projects.

In a nod to the AFL-CIO, Clinton endorsed the economic nationalism promoted by the unions, which has long been used to divide American workers from their brothers and sisters internationally, subordinate them to the profit interests of their “own” capitalists, and pave the way for trade war and militarism. Earlier in the week, she denounced Trump for using Chinese labor to produce his brand name suits and ties.

Well aware that the millions of workers and young people who voted for Sanders largely hate her pro-business policies and record, Clinton urged young people in particular not to “grow weary” with their miserable situation. “There are great ideas out there,” she said pathetically, “we are going to be partners in a big bold effort to increase economic growth

and distribute it more fairly.”

As the Socialist Equality Party’s candidate for US president, I reject the right-wing economic policies advanced by Clinton, which are dictated entirely by the profit needs of American capitalism. The working class in the US and around the world did not create the global economic crisis and must not pay for it!

The SEP calls for a vast redistribution of wealth to secure basic social rights, including the right to a decent-paying job, quality education, affordable housing, universal health care, a dignified retirement and access to leisure time and culture.

The SEP advances a program not for the improvement of capitalism, but for the establishment of socialism. The social rights of the working class cannot be secured without a direct attack on the interests of the capitalist class and the domination of the financial aristocracy over economic life.

This means an end to the private ownership of the large corporations, with all those valued above \$10 billion transformed into publicly owned enterprises under the democratic control of the working class. To provide quality jobs to all those who need them, the SEP calls for a multi-trillion-dollar public works program to rebuild infrastructure throughout the country.

We furthermore call for an end to the squandering of trillions of dollars on weaponry to conquer and oppress workers in other countries. Instead, trillions should be poured into social needs, to hire millions of doctors, nurses, teachers, construction workers and others to raise the material and cultural level of the population and put an end to poverty and want forever.

Regardless of who is elected in November, whether it is Trump or Clinton, the ruling class is preparing to escalate the assault on the working class. I call on all workers and young people to prepare for the struggles to come by supporting our campaign and joining the Socialist Equality Party.



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact