

The real issues in the 2016 US elections

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With Election Day only 12 weeks away, the Democratic and Republican candidates, Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, are running the most right-wing campaigns in the history of the United States.

Last week, Trump and Clinton each gave what were billed by their campaigns as major addresses on economic policy. They did not go beyond the demagoguery and right-wing nostrums that characterize American capitalist politics. Trump called for even more tax cuts for the rich. Clinton called for a continuation of the policies of the Obama administration, which has overseen the greatest redistribution of wealth from working people to the rich in American history.

A new police murder Saturday in Milwaukee provoked widespread outrage and disturbances in the city. Trump campaigns as the defender of the police against any criticism of its violence and brutality. Clinton portrays the issue as purely a racial one, covering up for the class role of the police as the front-line defender of the wealth of the capitalist ruling elite.

As for the growing threat of imperialist war, Trump is to elaborate Monday on his plans for deploying more US troops and warplanes in the Middle East. Clinton has focused her campaign on her credentials as an aggressive “commander-in-chief,” attacking Trump from the right as a tool of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Clinton has been backed in this by an unprecedented intervention from the military-intelligence apparatus, as former generals, admirals and spies declare their support for the former secretary of state and vouch for her credentials as a reliable representative of the national-security state. Three former CIA chiefs—Republican Michael Hayden, Democrat Leon Panetta and the “nonpartisan” Michael Morell—have gone on national television in the past week to tout her qualifications.

A growing number of Republican officeholders and former officials have declared their opposition to Trump, and in many cases their support for Clinton, for the most part citing her foreign policy “experience” and her hawkish views, going back to her vote for the Iraq War in 2002.

The corporate-controlled two-party system has presented the American people with the choice between the fascistic billionaire Trump, who advocates a mass roundup of immigrants, a ban on Muslims entering the country, and a massive buildup of the American military, and Clinton, the personification of the political establishment and the corporate status quo, an advocate of militarism and the drive towards war with Russia and China, both nuclear-armed powers.

There is a vast and growing gulf between the entire political system and the sentiments of millions of workers and young people. Trump and Clinton are the two most unpopular major-party candidates for president in modern history, with Trump deemed unacceptable by close to 70 percent of the population, while Clinton’s unfavorability rating tops 55 percent. As the *Washington Post* noted in a front-page report Sunday, for young people especially, the choice of Clinton vs. Trump “feels like a joke.”

While expressing revulsion at Trump, dozens of younger voters interviewed for the report voiced no enthusiasm for Clinton, a development the *Post* called “ominous.” Gone were the illusions inspired by the Obama campaign of 2008. According to the *Post*, “most talked about both her and Trump in searing, caustic words: Super villain. Evil. Chameleon. Racist. Criminal. Egomaniac. Narcissist. Sociopath. Liar. Lying cutthroat... Horrifying. Dishonest. Disgusting. Dangerous. Disaster.” Which term applied to which candidate was left unsaid, though most could equally apply to both.

Many of these younger voters backed the campaign

of Bernie Sanders, yet his so-called political revolution has proven a cynical fraud, aimed, as the WSWS warned, at channeling oppositional sentiment into the dead-end of the Democratic Party.

One-quarter of younger voters told Post-ABC polls that they would support a third party candidate. In a separate study reported by *USA Today*, Trump's support among voters under 35 stood at only 20 percent, an historic low for a major-party candidate, with more young voters planning to support no party or a third party than the Republicans.

The two officially recognized "third parties," however, the Libertarians and the Green Party, offer no alternative to the Democrats and Republicans. The Libertarians espouse a more extreme "free market" version of capitalism than even the Republicans, while the Greens defend the profit system, combining minor reform proposals with economic nationalism and reactionary calls to reduce consumption. Where the Greens have come to power, they have invariably supported war and austerity directed against the working class.

Only one campaign offers a genuine alternative to the working class and youth: the Socialist Equality Party and its candidates, Jerry White for president and Niles Niemuth for vice president. The SEP campaign advances a socialist perspective based on three fundamental principles:

1) Oppose US militarism! Stop the drive to World War III!

Our campaign is breaking the conspiracy of silence of Clinton, Trump, the Obama administration and the corporate media on the war plans of American imperialism. Millions of people--in Iraq, Libya, Syria and Afghanistan--have been killed, injured or turned into refugees in the wars launched by the United States since 2001. These regional wars are leading to global conflict, as Washington prepares to confront Russia in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, and China in the Far East. The SEP campaign seeks to build the foundations for a powerful international anti-war movement based in the working class.

2) Put an end to poverty and social inequality!

The SEP fights to abolish a system in which the super-rich exploit the labor of billions of workers around the world. We call 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 culture. The SEP advances a program not for the reform of capitalism, but for its abolition and replacement by socialism.

3) Defend democratic rights! No to government spying and police violence!

The growth of anti-capitalist sentiment in the US, as revealed in the support of millions of workers and young people for the campaign of Bernie Sanders, has frightened the US ruling elite. It is stepping up its preparations for mass repression of social opposition in the United States while relying on the Democratic Party and its pseudo-left apologists to split workers along the lines of race, gender and sexual orientation.

Whatever happens in November, the working class around the world confronts profound dangers. Even before the elections, a new war could erupt, as shown by the provocations this past week by the US-backed government in Ukraine against Russia. The world economy is mired in crisis, with mounting signs that the endless free money policy of global central banks is exhausting itself. Workers around the world are beginning to fight back against austerity and the greatest levels of social inequality since the Great Depression.

The struggles of workers all over the world must be unified and transformed into a conscious political struggle to overthrow the capitalist system and establish socialism--a global system of economic planning based on the satisfaction of social need.

It is to build the necessary political leadership for this struggle that the SEP is running candidates in the 2016 elections. We call on all our readers to join us in this struggle. To fight against war and barbarism, against inequality and dictatorship, make the decision to support our campaign and join the Socialist Equality Party.



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