One month to the US presidential election—what lies ahead

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The US presidential election campaign, with one month to go, is being conducted on a level so debased and filthy as to be virtually indescribable. Another nationally televised exercise in mutual mudslinging, name-calling and evasion of the issues looms on Sunday night, in the second presidential debate.

The two main candidates, Democrat Hillary Clinton and Republican Donald Trump, are the most unpopular political figures in modern US history, each detested by more than half the population, each rightly regarded as a self-serving liar. One is a fascistic bigot and demagogue, the other a stooge of Wall Street and the military-intelligence apparatus.

In the final month of the campaign, the usual apologists for the Democratic Party—the trade unions, liberal media editorialists from the *New York Times* to the *Nation* magazine, the upper-middle-class advocates of identity politics—will redouble their claims that the election of Clinton over Trump is the only thing that prevents the collapse of American democracy.

As the *Nation* put it in its predictably hyperbolic editorial statement endorsing Clinton, published this week, the case for the former Secretary of State "can be summed up in two words: Donald Trump." Even reliably pro-Republican newspapers have chimed in with warnings that the election of Trump would deal a devastating blow to the political stability of the United States. The *Atlantic* magazine went so far as to note that its endorsement of Clinton was only the third in its history, following its support of Lyndon Johnson over Barry Goldwater in 1964, and of Abraham Lincoln in 1860.

It should be pointed out that if American democracy is in such a fragile condition, it must be due to far more profound reasons than the election campaign of the Manhattan real estate and casino billionaire, who currently trails Clinton by a narrow margin in the polls. The editorial wise men do not attempt to explain the causes of this crisis to their readers. Nor have they presented any convincing rationale for why the election of Clinton rather than Trump will save the country from impending doom.

There is an enormous chasm between what the candidates talk about each day in the election campaign, and the measures that the American capitalist class is preparing to carry out once the identity of the next occupant of the White House has been settled. Here are three major issues that are unlikely to be referred to, let alone seriously discussed, in Sunday's debate:

The deepening global crisis of capitalism: According to a report issued by the International Monetary Fund ahead of its annual meeting, which began Friday in Washington, debt in the nonfinancial sector of the world economy has doubled in nominal terms since 2000, reaching a staggering $152 trillion last year, more than 225 percent of global GDP. This insupportable financial bubble, combined with weakened banking structures and sharpening trade tensions between the major powers, make a 2008-style market crash, on an even larger scale, increasingly likely, leading to a global depression.

The US drive towards war with Russia and China: The Obama administration has stepped up its campaign of vilification and denunciation of Russia Friday, with Secretary of State John Kerry demanding war crimes charges for alleged Russian bombing of civilians in Syria, while an official US government report blamed Russia for hacking into state voting systems and the computers of the Democratic National Committee. At the same time, the Pentagon is increasing its military pressure on China over its occupation of islets in the

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South China Sea. The next US president will take office on the brink of war with one or both nuclear powers.

The escalating class struggle in the United States: While Clinton campaigns as the continuator of the supposed "successes" of the Obama administration, Trump points to the dismal economic conditions for wide layers of the working class. But whether they spread complacency or profess alarm, both candidates are completely hostile to any movement from below. Trump's demands for "law and order" would be applied with brutal force to struggles of the working class. Clinton is allied to the trade unions, which seek to sabotage any struggle to defend jobs and wages, and to the urban political machines that control the police forces engaged in daily violence against workers and youth.

It is these processes, which can be summed up as the breakdown of world capitalism and the collapse of the social equilibrium in all the major countries, that account for the increasingly nervous and alarmist proclamations from liberal editorialists. The ground is indeed shifting beneath their feet, but not because of the personality of Trump. He is only a noxious symptom of the overall breakdown. Their real fear is the outbreak of a movement from below against both parties and the capitalist system they defend.

The Socialist Equality Party is running in the 2016 elections in order to prepare working people and young people for the great events that will erupt after November 8—if not in the final weeks before the vote. Our candidates, Jerry White for President and Niles Niemuth for Vice President, warn that the election campaigns of the capitalist candidates are aiming at concealing the development of the crisis and disarming working people.

One month from today, we urge all our supporters to cast a vote for White and Niemuth. However, our campaign is not fundamentally about votes, but about building a political party to lead the struggles to come. Join the Socialist Equality Party, get involved in the fight for socialism. To organize a movement against war and the capitalist system that creates it, and to prepare for what lies ahead, the SEP and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality are organizing a conference on November 5 in Detroit, "Socialism vs. Capitalism and War." For more information, visit the conference web site, socialismvswar.com.

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