

Six months of the Trump administration: The working-class strategy against capitalism and war

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Today marks six months since the inauguration of Donald Trump, bringing to power the most right-wing government in the history of the United States.

On January 20, the day of Trump's inauguration, the *World Socialist Web Site* referred to it as an "event that will live in infamy." With the election of Trump, we wrote, "History has caught up with American capitalism. The protracted process of economic and social decay has been covered over for decades with democratic phrases that served to disguise the gap between the official political myths and the underlying reality. But the mask has now come off. Donald Trump personifies the corruption, ruthlessness, parasitism and essentially fascist mindset of the capitalist oligarchs who control the United States."

The past six months have provided ample confirmation of this prognosis. Trump's domestic policy has centered on ripping up whatever remains of the social programs initiated in the 1930s and 1960s, attacking immigrant workers and refugees, destroying public education, eliminating corporate and environmental regulations, and pushing for a massive tax cut for the rich.

On foreign policy, Trump is intensifying militarist violence abroad, focused first on completing a campaign planned and initiated by President Obama to destroy the city of Mosul, killing thousands. The Trump administration has launched military strikes against Syria, dropped the largest nonnuclear weapon in the US arsenal on Afghanistan, and threatened countries throughout the world.

This agenda is deeply unpopular. Trump's inauguration was greeted with mass protest demonstrations throughout the country and

internationally. The actions of his administration since January 20 have deepened the broad-based hostility to Trump, who, according to the most recent polls, has achieved an unprecedented level of unpopularity within an extremely short period of time.

However, six months after the inauguration, the popular opposition has not found any significant expression in the form of an organized mass left-wing movement centered on the critical issues of social inequality, attacks on democratic rights and the escalating military operations of the United States. This situation is due, above all, to the efforts of the Democratic Party and its allies to subvert and channel popular hostility to Trump behind the interests of the faction of the ruling class and the state that they represent.

Let us review the record of the Democratic Party since the election of Trump on November 8, 2016.

The initial response of the Democrats to Trump's victory was to pledge a "peaceful transition." Obama insisted that elections are an "intramural scrimmage," with both sides on the "same team." Senators Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren and other "left" Democrats pledged to work with Trump insofar as he carried out policies that benefited the working class. This proviso—based on the absurd notion that a Trump administration could be pressured to carry out policies in the interest of workers—served no other purpose than to sow illusions and oppose action independent of the Democratic Party.

This was followed by an effort to direct popular opposition to Trump behind an increasingly frenzied, pro-war and neo-McCarthyite campaign around what is considered within sections of the ruling class to be

Trump's overly accommodating relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The opposition of the Democrats is centered not on Trump's right-wing, pro-corporate policies, or the grave danger his administration poses to basic democratic rights, but on concerns that Trump is subordinating the basic strategic imperatives of American imperialism to his own business interests.

Whatever its criticisms of Trump, the Democratic Party and the various middle-class protest organizations that tail behind it are irreconcilably hostile to any attempt to organize the working class on an independent basis.

The basic conclusion that must be drawn from this experience is that there can be no serious fight against the agenda of the Trump administration without a fight against the whole political establishment and the capitalist system upon which it is based.

Separate from the political warfare in Washington, social anger is building up, which, when unleashed, will disrupt all the plans and schemes of the ruling elite and its political representatives. The destruction of health care, poverty-level wages, mass indebtedness, the dismantling of public education, the war on immigrant workers, escalating police violence and unending war have produced a wellspring of opposition among tens of millions of people.

The working class must be armed with a program that addresses its needs. Not a single social or democratic right can be won without a frontal assault on the wealth of the ruling elite and its dictatorship over social and economic life. The unprecedented fortunes amassed by a criminal and parasitic ruling elite must be seized and used to resolve the desperate social crisis facing the vast majority of the population. The giant corporations and banks must be transformed into public utilities, under the democratic control of the working class.

There is immense and growing popular opposition not only to the Trump administration, but to the capitalist system. There are many signs of increasing working-class militancy, and it is only a matter of time—and not much time at that—before class-based anger breaks through to the surface of social and political life. The critical challenge is to provide this emerging movement with a clear political program and perspective. This is a period in which the perspective of revolutionary socialism can and will win a mass

audience.

This is the perspective upon which the Socialist Equality Party and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality are fighting. We urge all of our readers to draw the conclusions that arise from six months of the Trump administration. Join the SEP and IYSSE. Make the decision to fight against war, inequality and dictatorship. Make the decision to fight for socialism.



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