# What is “our democracy”?

**Eric London**
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At the heart of the Democratic Party-led anti-Russia hysteria is the claim that Russia and its president, Vladimir Putin threaten “our democracy.”

What are the indices of “our democracy” which the master conspirator in the Kremlin has worked so hard to undermine?

**Inequality and oligarchy**

• The two richest people—Jeff Bezos and Bill Gates—possess almost the same amount of wealth as the poorest half of the population.

• The richest 5 percent of the population owns 67 percent of the wealth. The poorest 60 percent of the population owns 1 percent of the wealth.

• The wealthiest Americans live on average 20 years longer than the poorest Americans.

• Seventy percent of Americans have less than $1,000 in savings.

• Banks have foreclosed on over 7 million homes since 2004.

• There are 554,000 homeless people on a given night.

• Indigenous people who first inhabited the country remain the most impoverished and exploited section of the population.

• In large parts of 10 states, women must travel over 100 miles for abortion access, which is threatened by the most right-wing majority on the Supreme Court in a century.

**Police repression and mass incarceration**

• Three percent of American adults—6.8 million people—are either in jail or prison or on parole or probation.

• There are 1.2 million police officers in the US—almost equal to the population of the state of New Hampshire.

• The police have killed 15,000 people since 2000.

• There are 55,000 children presently in juvenile detention.

• A third of states have a form of debtor’s prison, where the poor are locked up for failure to pay fines or debts.

**The costs of the “war on terror”**

• The US killed over one million people in the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

• The intelligence agencies lied to the population about “weapons of mass destruction” in Iraq.

• The US operated a network of “black site” CIA torture chambers throughout the world and continues to indefinitely detain dozens at the Guantanamo Bay prison.

• The Obama administration asserted the right to assassinate US citizens without due process when it assassinated Anwar Al-Awlaki with a drone strike in 2011.

• The US has spent almost $6 trillion on the wars in Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa since 2001.

**The military-industrial complex**

• Military spending accounts for over half of discretionary spending—10 times more than federal housing spending and nine times more than education spending.

• The Defense Department, with an annual budget now over $700 billion, is the nation’s largest employer, with 2.1 million employees, and the US military has active duty soldiers deployed in 150 countries.

**Elections and corporate control of government**

• Corporations spent roughly $3 billion lobbying the government in 2017 alone.

• Six billion dollars was spent influencing the 2016 election—the majority by corporations and the wealthy who can give unlimited amounts after the 2010 Supreme Court decision *Citizens United v. FEC.*

• Ballot restrictions make it impossible for third parties to challenge the domination of the Democratic and Republican parties.

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• Thirty-three states have implemented voter identification laws, which studies show bar up to 6 percent of the population from voting.

**The attack on immigrants**

• The US Navy is planning to build concentration camps to detain 120,000 immigrants.

• 5.4 million immigrants have been deported since 2001, and 1 million people currently face deportation orders in the US.

• Over 2,900 immigrant children remain separated from their parents and have been detained for weeks.

• Sexual, physical and psychological abuse of immigrants in detention is widespread.

• Jailing and deporting immigrants is a $1 billion per year industry for American corporations.

• The government has built an army of 20,000 Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents and 45,600 Customs and Border Protection agents to deport and detain immigrants.

• Immigrants have no right to counsel and many never appear before a judge at all.

**Censorship and state surveillance**

• Five media companies own 90 percent of the country's media outlets.

• In December 2017, the Federal Communications Commission ruled to abolish net neutrality, giving corporations and the government the right to censor and control internet access.

• The National Security Agency collected 534 million records of phone calls and text messages from US telecommunication providers in 2017—triple the figure from 2016.

• Google and Facebook are censoring socialist, anti-war and progressive websites by manipulating algorithms and downgrading search results to limit the potential audience of oppositional views.

• The government has pressed charges, prosecuted, or sought to extradite whistleblowers like Chelsea Manning, Edward Snowden, and Julian Assange for exposing details of US war crimes and mass surveillance.

This is the reality of "our democracy," and Mr. Putin, whatever else he may have done, cannot be blamed for any of the conditions enumerated above. The roots of this degeneration lie in the capitalist system and the growth of unprecedented levels of social inequality.

The intense political infighting between the factions of the ruling class over "Russian interference in our democracy" confirms that there is no constituency for democratic rights within the ruling class. Their abandonment of democratic forms of rule poses a great danger to the working class. The only way to defend democratic rights is through a fight against imperialist war, inequality, and capitalism.

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