

No to American fascism! Build a mass movement to force Trump out!

Statement of the Political Committee of the Socialist Equality Party
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The *World Socialist Web Site* first published the statement, “No to American fascism! Build a mass movement to force Trump out!” on October 14, 2019. The statement warned that “Trump is utilizing the power of the presidency to create an unconstitutional and illegal dictatorship.” In light of the recent nationwide military/police crackdown, the WSWS is republishing this crucial statement.

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President Donald Trump’s response to the impeachment inquiry initiated by Congress has assumed an openly fascistic character. In his speeches last week in Minneapolis, Minnesota and Lake Charles, Louisiana, Trump appealed openly to xenophobia, racism and anti-Semitism. He incited his audience of police and other rightwing forces against his political opponents, whom he denounced as “far left” and “socialist” politicians who “hate America.”

In a manner unprecedented in American history, Trump is seeking to utilize the power of the presidency to create a dictatorial regime. Contemptuous of all constitutional restraints, Trump is making it clear that he is prepared to use criminal and violent methods to hang on to power. In his Minneapolis tirade, he shouted that he intends to remain in office for “16 more years,” which would not be possible without the overthrow of the US Constitution. He has made no secret of the violent implications of his illegal claims to personal dictatorship, declaring that any moves to displace him will lead to “civil war.” Trump’s statement that his political opponents are guilty of “treason” evokes the specter of arrests and murderous proscriptions.

In a particularly ominous passage of his speech on Thursday, Trump defended his decision to remove troops from Syria by declaring, “We’re bringing the soldiers home. We may need them for something else, and they’ll be ready.” In the context of his assertion of dictatorial powers, this “something else” is a clear threat to use the military against domestic opposition within the United States. The White House has already begun to do this by mobilizing troops to enforce its brutal attacks on immigrants along the US-Mexico border.

To downplay, let alone deny, the fact that the Trump presidency is metastasizing rapidly into a right-wing authoritarian regime, with distinctly fascist characteristics, is to close one’s eyes to political reality. The old refrain, “It can’t happen here”—i.e., that American democracy is eternally immune from the cancer of fascism—is hopelessly out of date. The very fact that a thug like Trump ascended to the White House testifies to the terminal crisis of the existing political system.

Trump’s administration is the product of the deep-rooted economic and social contradictions of American capitalism. The massive concentration of wealth within the richest one percent of the population and the unprecedented level of social inequality are incompatible with traditional democratic forms of rule. Over the past four decades, the United States has evolved into an increasingly oligarchic society. Isolated from the great mass of the population, viewing every demand for an improvement of conditions of life as a threat to its wealth, the oligarchy is increasingly

hostile to democracy.

Trump, the product of New York’s financial underworld, articulates, with the necessary crudity and vulgarity, the authoritarian impulses of the oligarchy. His hysterical denunciations of socialism and communism voice the growing fear of the rich that demands for social reform will lead inevitably to a massive redistribution of wealth, culminating in the expropriation of capitalist property.

In its very foundation, the Trump administration has epitomized the negation of democracy. His presidency has been, from the very beginning, illegitimate. Through the anti-democratic mechanism of the Electoral College, Trump was elected despite having lost the popular vote by nearly three million ballots. Far from acknowledging the minority status of his administration, Trump acts as if he was swept into office in a landslide. But he knows full well that his policies—for all his cynical populist demagoguery—evoke massive popular opposition.

Trump’s appearances before police, security personnel and military audiences, as well as his carefully staged mass rallies designed to attract politically disoriented and backward elements, are all part of a calculated effort to create a political constituency upon which he can base an authoritarian regime, operating outside all of the traditional legal boundaries of the US Constitution.

American democracy has come to a historic crossroads. As it seeks to maintain power, the Trump presidency will assume an increasingly illegal, authoritarian and violent character.

The removal of this administration from power is a political necessity. But by whom and through what methods this objective is achieved is a life-and-death question.

Up until now, the official opposition to Trump has been dominated by the Democratic Party. The impeachment inquiry is the outcome of the increasingly bitter factional struggle within the ruling class. Basing itself on disaffected sections of the intelligence agencies, the military and the corporate-financial elite, the Democratic Party is employing the methods of a palace coup.

Trump’s opponents within the state apparatus are acutely conscious of the implications of the long-term decline in the global position of the United States. They view Trump’s foreign policy as erratic and unpredictable and, particularly with regards to Russia and Syria, in conflict with what they consider key geostrategic imperatives of American imperialism. It is for this reason that they have centered opposition on matters of foreign policy, first through the anti-Russia campaign and now on the basis of Trump’s telephone call with the Ukrainian president.

The social and political interests motivating the opposition to Trump within the state determine its methods. While Trump is responding to the impeachment by seeking to develop a right-wing movement, the Democrats are determined to avoid anything that would mobilize popular anger against Trump. In this sense, Trump displays a far greater grasp of political realities than his opponents, who are always looking over their shoulders, fearful of anything that will ignite the explosive social conflicts

within the United States.

This is why the impeachment inquiry is being conducted entirely behind closed doors and is confined to conflicts over imperialist foreign policy. It also explains the schizophrenic and hypocritical character of the Democrats' attitude to the Trump administration, which has alternated between hysterical denunciations of the president for undermining "national security" and functioning as an agent of the Putin government, with efforts to collaborate with Trump on critical elements of domestic policy.

However bitter their disagreements, all factions of the ruling class are agreed on the destruction of social programs, the assault on wages and benefits, the attack on immigrants, the destruction of democratic rights, and the massive buildup of the military. In the midst of their conflicts, the Democrats passed Trump's record budget for defense spending and smoothed the way for his tax cuts for the wealthy.

So long as the conflict is confined to the divisions within the ruling class, there can be no democratic or progressive outcome. Should the impeachment drive of the Democrats fail, it will strengthen Trump's political position. Should it succeed, it will elevate Trump's factotum, Mike Pence, to the presidency. Moreover, impeachment will actually strengthen the political influence of the CIA and FBI over the White House. It will legitimize a foreign policy based on an anti-Russia hysteria that will justify a dangerous confrontation with a nuclear-armed power. Either outcome represents an immense danger to the working class.

The obsession of the Democratic Party and the media with former Vice President Joe Biden and Trump's Ukraine phone call is a diversion. A mass movement for Trump's removal requires that his real crimes be identified. Moreover, the defense of democratic rights must be clearly connected to the fight to advance the social interests of the working class, which comprises the overwhelming majority of the population.

Trump must be removed for the following reasons:

- Trump is utilizing the power of the presidency to create an unconstitutional and illegal dictatorship.
- Trump is using the military to carry out his domestic policies, including the construction of a wall along the border.
- Trump is threatening to stay in power beyond constitutionally mandated term limits and has indicated that he will not accept as legitimate an election that leads to his defeat.
- Trump is instigating violence against his political opponents and politically encouraging fascistic individuals who have carried out acts of mass murder directed at immigrants and Jews.
- Trump is persecuting immigrants and refugees, including through the erection of concentration camps on the US-Mexico border.
- Trump is encouraging the violent actions of the police, which are responsible for the deaths of more than 1,000 Americans every year.
- Trump is threatening countries that defy US dictates with "annihilation," in violation of international and domestic law.
- Trump is equating opposition to capitalism with treason, in violation of constitutionally protected freedom of speech.

The fight against the Trump administration and the defense of the most basic democratic rights is a fight against capitalism and American imperialism, which must be conducted completely independent of and in opposition to the Democratic Party.

The United States is at the epicenter of a global crisis. Everywhere, democratic forms of rule are breaking down. In Germany, 75 years after the fall of the Third Reich, fascism is again a dangerous political force. In

France, the government of Emanuel Macron has instituted rule by decree against growing social unrest. Britain is ruled by the fascistic Boris Johnson. In Brazil and India, far-right and extreme nationalist governments are in power.

Democratic rights are not compatible with a social system based on extreme inequality and endless war. The lesson of 1930s is that the fight against fascism and authoritarianism can be based only on an anti-capitalist and explicitly socialist program.

The methods required in this fight are the methods of the class struggle, and its objective is the establishment of a workers' government to radically redistribute the wealth, place the giant corporations and banks under the democratic control of working people, and implement a planned economy based on social need, not private profit.

More than two years ago, in its statement, "Palace Coup or Class Struggle: The political crisis in Washington and the strategy of the working class," the WSWS wrote:

Mass struggles are on the agenda in the United States. Protest rallies, demonstrations and strikes will tend to acquire a general nation-wide character. The political conclusion that flows from this analysis is that the fight of the working class against Trump and all that he represents will raise ever more urgently the necessity of a political mass movement, independent of and opposed to both the Republicans and the Democrats, against the capitalist system and its state.

Mass struggles are no longer "on the agenda." They have already begun and are intensifying. The past two years have seen many expressions of popular anger and working class opposition, in the United States and internationally.

In the US, the wave of teachers' strikes over the past two years has been followed this year by the month-long strike by 48,000 GM workers, the longest strike of autoworkers in decades. As the trade unions have sought to shut down the GM strike, new strikes have been launched by 3,500 Mack Truck workers in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Florida, and 2,000 miners in Arizona and Texas. More than 20,000 teachers in Chicago could go on strike this week.

Herein lies the social power that can bring down Trump and expose his reactionary demagoguery for what it is. Mass demonstrations and protests must be organized by workers and student youth against the Trump administration. The logic of this movement is toward a political general strike, which will raise the question of political power. The organization of such a movement requires the formation of an interconnected network of popular workplace and neighborhood committees to unite all sections of the working class, in opposition to the efforts of the trade unions to isolate and suppress workers' struggles.

The fight against the Trump administration must be connected to the fight against social inequality, the destruction of social programs and infrastructure, the attack on jobs and wages, the terrible conditions facing an entire generation of young people, the vicious persecution of immigrant workers, the degradation of the environment, and the consequences of unending and expanding war, which threatens all of humanity. The opposition of workers and youth in the United States must be connected to the eruption of social struggles among workers throughout the world, who share the same interests and confront the same problems.

This objective movement must be guided by a conscious socialist program and perspective. The Socialist Equality Party and its youth organization, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality, are spearheading this fight. We call on all those who agree with this perspective to make the decision to join and build the SEP and its sister

parties in the International Committee of the Fourth International throughout the world.



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