

Democrats call for “patience” as Trump moves forward with coup plot

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19 October 2020

With two weeks remaining before the general election, Donald Trump continues to mobilize far-right forces in support of his bid to remain in power no matter the outcome of the November 3 election.

Speaking in Muskegon, Michigan on Saturday, the president repeated baseless warnings of massive voter fraud and launched into a bitter denunciation of the state’s Democratic Governor Gretchen Whitmer, who was the target of an assassination plot by Trump supporters unearthed 12 days ago.

“Be careful of her and her attorney general,” Trump told the crowd in reference to Whitmer and the state’s top lawyer, Democrat Dana Nessel. “Because you know, they’re, like, in charge of the ballot stuff.” At the mention of Whitmer, the crowd chanted, “Lock her up!”

Yesterday, the Trump campaign further intensified its attacks on Whitmer, provocatively claiming that the governor was encouraging *her* supporters to assassinate Trump. In a statement reminiscent of the Nazi tactic of the “big lie,” his campaign posted on Twitter: “Whitmer is encouraging assassination attempts against President Trump just weeks after someone sent a ricin-laced package to the White House.”

Acting with the implicit or direct approval of Trump, statewide police and sheriffs associations declared Monday they will not enforce an order issued by Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson barring open-carry of weapons at polling places on Election Day. This act of semi-rebellion against an elected official’s lawful order raises the question as to who is in charge of the state. The weapons ban was issued because militias plan to disrupt voting on election day.

The dangerous role played by the fascist right in league with the police makes the cowardly response of the Democratic Party all the more politically criminal.

Yesterday, the office of Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer released an official position paper on behalf of the Senate Democratic caucus announcing the party’s plans for combatting Trump’s strategy.

The paper is a declaration of spinelessness and unseriousness. Titled “2020 General Election: Counting Votes & What to Expect on Election Day,” the document makes no reference to the plot against Whitmer or Democratic Virginia Governor Ralph Northam, who was also a target. It responds to Trump’s threats to override the election outcome by stating:

It is unfortunate that President Trump and his allies are attempting to stoke fear and chaos. The American people should be aware of these efforts, but must understand that they are nothing more than disinformation. ... Americans should be prepared to reject misinformation and be patient about results in places where counting ballots may take longer.

This is a miserable statement of political capitulation. Trump’s threat to remain in power is not an “unfortunate” accident like a glass of spilled milk. It is a deliberate fascist strategy, one without precedent in US history, backed by substantial sections of the police and repressive state apparatus.

Schumer and the Democratic Party know this full well. Earlier this year, Joe Biden told the *Daily Show*’s Trevor Noah that the prospect of Trump refusing to leave office “keeps me up at night.” Now, Biden and the Democrats tell the population there is “nothing to see here.” Meanwhile, they ruthlessly make their case

within the ruling class that Biden is the better steward of the crown jewels of American imperialism.

As representatives of a powerful faction of finance capital, the Democratic Party's statement is aimed above all at lulling the population to sleep and downplaying the danger of dictatorship. The Democrats' greatest fear is that "chaos" in the form of social opposition from below will escape their control and threaten the long-term interests of Wall Street and American imperialism.

Leon Trotsky identified this fundamental political dynamic in his November 1934 essay *Whither France*. Referring to the pro-capitalist, middle-class French Radical Party, Trotsky wrote: "Like the camel under its driver's whip, Radicalism gets down on its four knees to let capitalist reaction sit between its humps." Terrified of the threat of social opposition from below, Trotsky continued, they "are more than ever striving to cover up the reaction, to lull and dupe the people and in this way prepare for the victory of Fascism."

A critical role in this process is played by the "left" Democrats like Bernie Sanders, who has not once tweeted to his 13 million followers about the Michigan conspiracy or the threats against Whitmer's life, and by groups like the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) and its semi-official publication, *Jacobin* magazine. *Jacobin* has not written a single article on the Michigan plot, and the DSA has issued no statement condemning it.

The pseudoleft's complicity was on display at an online *Jacobin* event last week with former Communist Party leader Angela Davis, Debt Collective founder Astra Taylor and editor Bhaskar Sunkara.

The participants consciously refused to reference the plot against Whitmer. At the beginning of the meeting, Taylor declared, "We are not going to spend a lot of time on the election, on the news." The panelists said they support a vote for Biden. This is the mechanism for suppressing social opposition: *Jacobin* and the DSA capitulate to Sanders, who capitulates to Biden, who yields to Trump. Without this dynamic, Trump's position would be untenable.

The growth of a fascist movement in the United States is a reality. This is Trump's political strategy on November 3 and beyond. And even if he were to lose the election, Trump would still have the long months between November 3 and January 20, 2021 to pardon

his far-right supporters and escalate his fascist strategy.

Regardless of the outcome, the Democratic Party's strategy of capitulation will continue.

If the Biden-Harris ticket prevails, their administration will make concession after concession to the right in the name of "national unity" and "governing for all Americans." Militias will become a mainstay in the American political landscape and will even be invited by Democratic and Republican governors to raise their grievances at the same state capitols to which they are currently planning to lay siege.

The same tendencies on display in the US are playing out in Brazil, Germany, England, Argentina, France, and elsewhere. The intervention of the working class on an international scale and with an independent, socialist program is required to stop the growth of fascist reaction.



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