Joe Biden's cabinet: A rainbow coalition of imperialist reaction

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The corporate media and Democratic Party are celebrating Joe Biden's incoming cabinet as "the most diverse in US history," proclaiming that the appointment of women, African Americans and Latinos to key cabinet positions is a sign of tremendous social progress.

In reality, Biden's rainbow coalition of imperialist reaction encapsulates and exposes the right-wing essence of identity politics.

Nowhere is the excitement more palpable than in the editorial offices of the *New York Times*, a leading proponent of racial and gender politics, which gushed that the president-elect has "signaled his intention to draw from a diverse cross section of America in building his cabinet."

The *Times* writes: "Unlike President Trump's cabinet, which is more white and male than any in nearly 40 years, Mr. Biden's list of likely top advisers promises to reflect 21st-century sensibilities." It cites statements by Biden aides claiming the incoming cabinet "will look like America."

Whatever the skin color of the cabinet members, the Biden administration will not *think* like America. The population is demanding massive social change to address the deadly pandemic and unprecedented levels of inequality and social desperation.

Though over seven in 10 Americans favor universal health care, there will be no constituency within the cabinet for such a policy. The same goes for the more than six in 10 Americans who support tuition-free college and student debt forgiveness. They will be "represented" by a cabinet consisting of equity fund partners of various races and genders.

While eight in 10 people now favor diverting money from police departments to support social programs following this summer's nationwide, multi-racial demonstrations against police violence, Biden has pledged to *increase* funding for the police.

And for the over 75 percent of Americans who want troops removed from Afghanistan and Iraq and who support cutting defense spending, the multi-racial Biden cabinet will give them the exact opposite.

The nominees are not pioneers of their race or gender, they are social criminals:

Avril Haines, a former CIA deputy director, will be the first woman director of national intelligence. Haines was an architect of the Obama administration's drone assassination program, which killed thousands of impoverished Africans, Arabs and Central Asians, with no attention to the victims' gender.

Alejandro Mayorkas will be the first Latino to head the Department of Homeland Security. This will be little comfort for the hundreds of thousands of Latino (and other) immigrants he will deport in the coming months and years, or to the immigrant children he jailed in cages when he was deputy DHS secretary from 2013 to 2016.

Janet Yellen will be the first woman treasury secretary, after having helped implement the quantitative easing policy that transferred tens of billions of dollars to the banks on a monthly basis during the Bush and Obama administrations, while providing no support for millions of foreclosure victims.

Linda Thomas-Greenfield, an African American, will be ambassador to the United Nations. Thomas-Greenfield worked in the State Department to help American oil and mining corporations extract resources from the world's most impoverished countries.

Though not formally a member of the cabinet, Vice President-elect Kamala Harris—the first woman and first African American in that position—made her career as a "black woman prosecutor" by trampling on the lives of the mostly impoverished people she incarcerated.

Then there are the white men, whose own records are no more and no less criminal than those of their female and minority counterparts.

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Antony Blinken is the nominee for secretary of state, having helped orchestrate the wars in Syria, Libya and Yemen. He was a partner at a private equity firm and co-founded WestExec Advisors, which works with Israeli intelligence and helped develop Google's censorship tools. Former Secretary of State John Kerry, supporter of intervention in Syria and the 2013 coup in Egypt that established the murderous al-Sisi dictatorship, will be "climate czar."

As for those on the shortlists for other cabinet positions, the *Times* holds its breath for the prospect of Tammy Duckworth becoming the first handicapped, Thai woman to serve as defense secretary. Former South Bend, Indiana Mayor Pete Buttigieg could be the first openly gay secretary of transportation.

These servants of Wall Street and US imperialism have nothing in common with the working people of "their own" race, gender or sexual orientation. It is class, not identity, which is the fundamental dividing line in American society.

This was on display during a surreal press conference announcing the cabinet yesterday, in which Biden made little mention of the coronavirus pandemic currently ravaging the country and the world, instead focusing on the "personal stories" of the above-named nominees. When it was their turn to speak, the nominees congratulated themselves and their loved ones for the career advancement.

Meanwhile, in the real world, 260,000 Americans are dead from the pandemic, with a disastrous winter ahead. The dead include a disproportionate number of poor and working people of all races who were forced back to work for corporate profit. They could not retreat to second or third homes in the countryside. They could not afford adequate health care and for many, underlying health problems (heart disease, obesity, smoking) are themselves badges of generations of poverty and oppression.

The ruling class's bipartisan policy is to fuel the markets with death like coal fuels a steam engine train. Biden has reassured corporate America that "there will be no national lockdown," while Democrats and Republicans have conspired to ensure no substantial increase in benefits for the unemployed.

In the two days since Biden began announcing his cabinet picks, the Dow Jones Industrial Average shot up nearly 1,000 points, breaking records and crashing through the 30,000 point mark. The affluent sections within each race and gender grow obscenely wealthy while workers of all races confront varying degrees of disaster.

The selection of Biden's cabinet shows that politics based on race, gender and sexuality has become a fundamental part of the Democratic Party's efforts to divide workers, enrich themselves, and falsely present themselves as "representational" of the broad masses, who in reality have no representation whatsoever in any branch of government.

Meanwhile, Trump and his fascist supporters capitalize on growing dissatisfaction with the race-obsessed Democrats. Trump doubled his support among black men and women in the 2020 election and tripled his support among LGBT people. At the same time, the far right sees recruitment opportunities among young white people who have no prospects for the future and are tired of being told by Democrats that they are nothing but racist "deplorables" who deserve their desperation.

In order to immediately address the social needs of workers around the world, the trillions of dollars hoarded by the rich must be seized and made available to alleviate human suffering. This requires the greatest possible degree of unity of all workers in a common struggle.

The world working class consists of billions of people who work thousands of different jobs, speak hundreds of different languages and have hundreds of different religions and local customs. Their skin, hair and eyes happen to come in many colors. For hundreds of years, in each country, the bourgeoisie has attempted to teach workers to hate one another based on pseudo-science, lies and violence.

The great historic task of socialists is to combat the long legacy of communalism and racial politics in order to make this massive, heterogeneous social force aware of its tremendous social power. The affluent proponents of identity politics who pretend to be "left-wing" are bitter opponents of the historic struggle to unify the international working class. For this reason they must be uncompromisingly opposed.

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