

Jacobin complains of being frozen out of Biden administration while promoting illusions in the Democrats

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In the weeks since the US election, as Joe Biden prepares a right-wing administration of austerity and war, *Jacobin* magazine, affiliated with the Democratic Socialists of America, is churning out articles complaining about being frozen out.

A typical example is a December 4 article by David Sirota and Andrew Perez titled “Beltway Liberals Aren’t Fighting Biden’s Pro-Corporate Admin Picks Hard Enough.”

Sirota is a longtime Democratic Party operative and former speechwriter for Bernie Sanders. In the early 2000s, he worked in the political department of the right-wing Zionist American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

The article is directed not so much against Biden, who is described merely as an “incrementalist,” as against liberal organizations and think tanks that are seeking to conceal the pro-corporate, pro-war character of the president-elect’s proposed cabinet. Clearly, those in and around the DSA who were hoping for positions at some level of a Biden administration are feeling betrayed.

The authors write: “The disconnect between Biden’s nominating business-friendly corporatists and Beltway liberals effusively celebrating those nominees spotlights the latter groups’ decision to genuflect for access and influence—rather than being brutally honest about the situation. ... This culture of acquiescence gives swamp creatures a free pass—and it may just deliver an incrementalist Biden administration that takes progressives for granted and consequently fails to address national emergencies.”

Among those appointees singled out by the authors is Neera Tanden, named as Biden’s budget director. They

write: “And despite—or perhaps because of—Tanden being one of the nation’s most vicious personal trolls of Senator Bernie Sanders and his progressive supporters, Sanders’ putatively liberal Senate colleagues went out of their way to make a public show of praising her.”

These fair-weather liberals are, according to *Jacobin*, guilty of “failing to provide the loyal opposition they promised their grassroots supporters, members and donors.”

So what is the role of the supposedly “socialist” *Jacobin* and DSA? To serve as the “loyal opposition” to a viciously right-wing, pro-war, pro-austerity Biden administration, which they diplomatically term “incrementalist.”

Another example of *Jacobin*’s disgruntlement over Biden’s appointments is a November 17 article titled “Joe Biden is Freezing Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren Out of His Cabinet.”

What conclusions does *Jacobin* draw from the right-wing government being assembled by Biden—a government that it admits consists of corrupt “swamp” mouthpieces for big business and the military/intelligence establishment? They conclude that it can and must be pressured to the left and made to carry out a “progressive” agenda.

As Sirota and Perez write: “If there is to be any hope for the most desperately needed policy changes—and hope to prevent a Biden administration from cutting bad legislative deals with Republicans—there needs to be a real, reliable, and robust opposition, even if it annoys Washington power players.”

In other words, DO NOT BREAK WITH THE DEMOCRATS!

There is no mention in this “analysis” of the pandemic or the political crisis surrounding the elections. There is no mention of Trump’s cultivation of fascist forces. There is no class analysis and there is no class struggle. There is not even a hint of revolution or a struggle against capitalism.

Jacobin has virtually nothing to say on any of these issues. Visitors to the online publication will find almost nothing on the pandemic, let alone criticism of the homicidal “herd immunity” strategy of both big business parties, centered on their back-to-work and back-to-school drives.

Over the past three months, as the COVID-19 pandemic was exploding out of control, *Jacobin* published a grand total of some 10 articles on the coronavirus crisis.

The DSA-allied publication’s near-silence on the pandemic is not a mystery. In September, *Jacobin* carried an interview with Harvard University Professor Martin Kulldorff, an outspoken advocate of the Trump administration’s policy of “herd immunity” and coauthor of the Great Barrington Manifesto, which opposes any measures to contain the spread of the coronavirus and demands the full opening of business and the schools.

The interview promoted this criminal policy, already responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths in the US, and sought to give it a “left” veneer, anticipating that a Biden administration would in all essentials continue to pursue the Trump strategy. In a passage approvingly retweeted by *Jacobin* publisher Bhaskar Sunkara, Kulldorff declared, “The lockdown is the worst assault on the working class in half a century.”

On December 10, as the US death toll was racing to 300,000 and daily infections were surpassing 200,000, *Jacobin* broke its virtual silence on the pandemic and posted an article (“Joe Biden Said He’d ‘Follow the Science’ on the Pandemic. He Isn’t”) which criticizes the president-elect for rejecting a lockdown to contain the disease. The article neglects to point out, however, that it is denouncing Biden for following the very “herd immunity” policy promoted by *Jacobin* itself.

As for Trump’s refusal to concede the election, one would hardly know this is even happening by reading *Jacobin*. *Jacobin*’s silence on Trump’s coup operation mirrors the cowardly efforts of Biden and the Democratic Party to downplay the danger to democratic

rights out of fear of mass resistance to Trump from below.

Jacobin speaks for privileged sections of the middle class, part of the top 10 percent of the population striving to carve out for themselves a greater share of the power and wealth controlled by the top 5 and 1 percent. It seeks to keep working class opposition to social inequality, attacks on democratic rights and war trapped within the confines of the capitalist two-party system and block the development of an independent socialist and revolutionary movement of the working class.

In the 2020 elections, *Jacobin* and the DSA performed this reactionary function first by promoting the Bernie Sanders campaign, and when Sanders once again capitulated, as he had in 2016, to campaign for Biden, they pushed the pragmatic and opportunist “lesser evil” line in an effort to corral workers and youth behind the Democratic candidate.

Sanders’ shameless lying, echoed by *Jacobin*, went so far as to predict that a Biden administration would be the most progressive since Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal. For the most part, however, *Jacobin* and the DSA argued that a Biden administration would provide “space” and a “place at the table” for “progressive” and “left” forces.

Now that this pretense has been shattered by Biden’s right-wing cabinet picks and his endless appeals for bipartisan unity with the Republicans—even as the latter work openly to throw out millions of votes and overturn his election victory—they continue to push the lie that the Democratic Party can be made to carry out progressive measures.



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